

THE ARGOSY

JUNE 1901

AN INVITATION

COME ; the summer-spirit beckons !
Leave your highways of the city ;
Let the gay and let the witty
Bid you stay : yet one that reckons
Art unkind, but Nature tender,
Calls you to the deeper pleasure,
Takes his cup, and fills his measure,
Claims your presence, cries your pity,
Asks your passionate surrender,
Bids you give him all your treasure,
Where the ripened glories rise
Of an earthly Paradise.

Come ; for yet you have not sighted
This green land of rock and river,
Where the waters gleam ; where quiver
Marshes frost hath never blighted.
Here our Graces with their singing

Soon could tame your Furies' passion,
Here survives the ancient fashion,
Honour lives : Love is requited.
And the heart you have delighted
Shall not fail, fresh tribute bringing,
Heralding the time to be :
Faint yet bold ; a slave, but free.

Come ; the spell is yet unbroken,
Canopies the heavens o'er us
Spread, and life that lies before us
Hath the stars for sign and token
Of a faith unseen, yet spoken
With the music you discover
In the language of a lover :
So this mystic note of beauty
Swells into a lighter chorus,
Calls you to your present duty :
Come, nor evermore depart ;
All my hope is in your heart !

ARTHUR LEIGH.

MALICIOUS FORTUNE¹

By STELLA M. DÜRING, AUTHOR OF "BETWEEN THE DEVIL
AND THE DEEP SEA," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XV

"I T'S risky, my dear fellow, deucedly risky."

"Why? How?" Dickie Tiark turned with the sharp inquiry, his hands under his coat-tails, a fierceness on his mild and ugly face that sat there very oddly. "She can't punish me in any way, even if I'm wrong."

"No," said Mr. MacArthur, mopping his warm head with his big bandana, "but she can me!"

Dickie laughed. No troubles sit so lightly on the sympathies of his friends as those of the man who is very much married.

"Keep out of it!" he advised.

"It's all very well to say keep out of it—but—I can't! I always thought the same as you do, that the poor child was as innocent as a baby, and I'm damned if I can help saying so—whatever's the consequence."

"Well," said Dickie slowly and deliberately, "I'm going through with it, I'm bent upon it. If you feel like helping, so much the better for me. If you don't—I shall quite understand why, you know."

"What have you done so far?" asked Mr. MacArthur with a resigned sigh.

"I've been to Kensington and seen the pawnbroker. He remembers the circumstance perfectly, people don't pawn pearls every day. I asked him to describe the young woman—that was his phrase, not mine. He says she wore a serge suit and a sailor hat—any one might wear that, you know."

"Ay, but she did! Had 'em all, I remember it quite well.

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Sweetest little thoroughbred you ever saw she used to look in 'em too." And saddened by his memories the little gentleman shook his head almost as long as Lord Burleigh.

"I asked him what he meant when he called her a young woman. He sticks to it she was young, but not so very young—you know what men are for describing."

"She's four-and-twenty," with a profound sigh.

"Then I asked him if he considered her pretty, and all his answer was that she didn't strike him as in any ways particular. To my mind that settles the matter."

"What matter?"

"That it wasn't Helen. The man has eyes in his head."

A vague relief dawned on Mr. MacArthur's face. There was one other person, it had occurred to him more than once, who might have pawned those pearls, and she was pretty too. His next speech was painfully transparent.

"Mrs. MacArthur took 'em out," he said slowly.

"Yes, I know. I—I hope you'll forgive what I'm going to tell you now, MacArthur, but"—tying a series of strikingly original knots in the macramé work that fringed the mantelpiece—"I asked if she had put them in, too."

"And w-w-what did he say?"

"Swore he had never set eyes on her before, no one could have been more positive."

"Then who——?"

"I think it was Forbes, I have always thought so."

"There isn't a doubt of it, vinegar-faced old cat!"

The relief occasioned by the idea and his explosion together was so unmistakable that Dickie made his first point with extreme reluctance.

"She wouldn't do it—on her own, you know."

"You mean——"

"I mean that some one must have put her up to it, helped her to do it."

"H'm," said Mr. MacArthur miserably.

"What are you talking about? It sounds interesting!"

Mr. MacArthur started, dropped the poker with a clatter, and took a considerable time picking it up again. Dickie turned.

There was a distant cousinship between him and the elder gentleman, but he had always steadily ignored all relationship with his wife.

"I was talking about Miss Thorneycroft," he said quietly.

Mrs. MacArthur took a hand-screen from the mantelpiece, shielded her fairness from the fire, and spoke with slow displeasure.

"Then I wish you wouldn't. The girl disgraced herself and was dismissed. She should never be even mentioned again in my house by my permission."

Dickie regarded her steadily. Even the peculiarity of his appearance, as he stood with his long nose thrust eagerly forward and his forehead and his chin running back, could not hide a manliness and sincerity that were very attractive.

"Mrs. MacArthur," he asked, "did you know I wanted to marry her?"

Mrs. MacArthur's hand twitched a moment; that the news was unwelcome was evident.

"I am sorry for your taste," she said with an icy smile.

"That doesn't so much matter because, you see, she refused me." Dickie's own secrets were no safer in his hands than other people's. "But if there were any chance of her changing her mind I'd be a happy man to-day."

"Then I'm very glad there isn't—for your sake!"

"But I'm not so sure there isn't. I think, perhaps, if I could prove—I'd *like* to find out the truth about those pearls, wouldn't you?"

"I know the truth about them"—a little white about the lips.

"But—I'm not so sure about that, either. I've been making inquiries in Kensington——"

"Indeed!" The whiteness about her lips was a little more apparent, and the smile in her eyes not quite so natural.

"And—and—I'd like to sift the matter to the bottom, wouldn't you?"

"We did sift it to the bottom. Nothing could be clearer than the evidence against her. I—I wouldn't force this any further if I were you. I may be obliged to prosecute if you do!"

"I wish you had prosecuted at first!"

"So do I!—but it's peculiar, to say the least of it, that you should."

"Well," sturdily, "we should have got at the truth, anyhow."

"Exactly so, and it would probably have meant five years penal servitude for Miss Thorneycroft. She would be grateful for your solicitude if she saw where it was likely to land her, wouldn't she?"

"I'd risk it!" said Dickie. "I'd risk even that for a chance of trying it in open court."

"I'm afraid you won't get the chance. I certainly have no desire to figure in the police courts, and I should imagine Miss Thorneycroft hasn't either."

"No, I'm afraid that's true," with a rueful recollection of Helen's confidences to him on the subject, "but—but there can be no objection to my doing a little private inquiry work on my own, can there? You'll help me, won't you, Mrs. MacArthur? You'd love to think you had helped to join two fond hearts?"

"Two?" with a quick raising of skilfully darkened brows. "I thought she had refused you!"

"So she has, but hope springs eternal in some people's breasts. Next time she mightn't, perhaps, if——"

"I see," said Mrs. MacArthur thoughtfully; "it's to be a sort of *quid pro quo*."

"Well, it's not exactly that, either," gloomily realising how very small was the springing hope to which he had just alluded. "But I know I can count upon your kind heart."

"I'm not aware of much kindness in my heart for Helen Thorneycroft!" with considerable truth. "The girl has disgraced herself, as I said before, is, in plain English——"

Dickie laid a quick hand on her arm.

"Don't say it, Mrs. MacArthur, don't! Remember what I've just told you."

"Whatever you tell me does not alter facts, Mr. Tiark."

"But is it a fact? That's what I want to find out. If you won't help, you won't hinder, will you? I mean—if you hear that I'm making inquiries—I couldn't do it without letting you

know first—you'll not think me underhand and—and—a modern Paul Pry. I think I've got a clue——"

"Oh, I won't think anything! Make any inquiries you like; convince yourself by all means; it's the very best thing you can do. I've certainly no desire to welcome a girl like that as a member of the family, however remote, and the kindest thing that can happen to you is to be cured of a mad infatuation that I never did and never shall understand!" And Mrs. MacArthur laid down her fire-screen and languidly removed herself.

"You've got to hit out now, my boy, and hit hard!" said Mr. MacArthur. It was the first time he had spoken since his wife's entrance. "You shouldn't have told her you had a clue." And he rang the bell sharply.

"What are you ringing for?" asked Dickie with sudden apprehension.

"Forbes!"

"But"—dismayed, almost agnast—"I'm not ready!"

"You've got to get ready, sharp, it's your only chance."

Forbes came sedate, respectable, and all too quickly for Dickie.

"Lock the door, Tiark," said Mr. MacArthur in a husky whisper as he wiped a moist brow. "Now go on!"

Dickie shot him a look of bitter reproach and then gazed wildly round the room for inspiration. Forbes stood stolid, respectful, and evidently a good deal astonished. Dickie's eyes, big and bright and blue, swept over her, but failed to discover any suggestion of help in her neat grey dress and embroidered apron.

"Go on!" said Mr. MacArthur with emphasis.

Desperately Dickie raised an impressive forefinger.

"Once upon a time," he began in true fairy-tale fashion, "there was a pawnshop in Kensington. On August 3 last a young woman, wearing a blue serge dress and jacket and a sailor hat, went into this pawnshop and pledged a valuable pearl necklace. She only asked five pounds upon it, though the man behind—behind the counter told her it was worth a good deal more. She gave the name of Harriet Thorn."

"Yes, sir," said Forbes respectfully. This was evidently all old history.

"The—the remarkable part of the story is"—and the forefinger was more emphatic—"that the young woman's coat, skirt, and hat did not belong to her. It was borrowed for the day from—somebody else. The young man behind the counter was asked the other day to give a description of the young woman. He said"—frankly studying Forbes' face—"that she had a longish nose and grey eyes and thin lips, that she had lightish hair, but not so very much of it, and—and a mole on one side of her chin."

Was it fancy or were Forbes' thin lips just a shade tighter, her long nose just a thought more pinched?

"Yes, sir," she said again, quite respectfully.

"And that wasn't all." And here Dickie drew a long breath, for this was where his fairy-tale came in. "In the next little box—there was a little box, wasn't there?" with a truly Machiavellian subtlety. Dickie's methods of investigation were continental, and quite innocent of that tender solicitude lest the suspected party should incriminate himself, that hampers our own.

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir," said Forbes sedately.

"There must have been. In the next little box stood a young man—with a Kodak. He took a snapshot of that young woman, she—she interested him, you know. Would—would you like to see that snapshot?"

"If—if you've any wish to show it me, sir."

Was she really as impassive as she looked? Dickie's heart sank.

"Oh, Lord, I wish I could," he groaned inwardly. "Well, I—I haven't got it about me just at present, but I will later on, you know," with a spurious cheerfulness that did not deceive Forbes for a moment.

There was a pause. Dickie had come to the end of his resources, and all his machinations had ended in—nothing. Forbes looked up, a glint in her eye Dickie was not able to put a name to.

"I hear my mistress' bell, sir," she said quietly.

"Oh," replied Dickie blankly, "then—you had better go, Forbes." And he unlocked the door with shamefaced alacrity, and turned on Mr. MacArthur as it closed, at once forlorn and furious.

"Now you've done it, old man, shown my hand, spoiled everything. What I'm going to do next——"

"Not at all, not at all, my dear fellow," fussing anxiously about and not quite so confident as he sounded. "You've frightened her, frightened her thoroughly, and that's something! There'll be developments, you take my word for it, and that before long."

"I—I hope so, I'm sure," said Dickie blankly.

There were. Mrs. MacArthur often complained, not without reason, that Forbes waited quite as much on her husband as she did upon herself. But that same evening, when he shouted testily for her as he dressed for dinner, there was no Forbes to wait upon him.

"Her sister is ill, and Forbes has had to go to her. She was telegraphed for this afternoon," explained Mrs. MacArthur, languidly snapping on her bracelets. "It's very tiresome, isn't it."

"That the sister who lives in Doughty Street?" making a wreck of his tie as he spoke.

"She doesn't live in Doughty Street now, she has moved."

"She's been deuced quick about it," he told himself with a half-frightened chuckle, "she lived there yesterday, Forbes told me so."

After dinner he lost no time in informing Dickie of the prompt arrival of his promised developments.

"She has run away, my boy," he told him with an excited giggle, "and you've got to run after her if you mean to do anything further in the matter. I told you she was frightened. She's gone to her sister in Doughty Street, but she'll not stay there."

"Doughty Street?"

"Yes, Bloomsbury, keeps a lodging house, number 41A. You get in—milkman, gasman, waterman, anything—only find Forbes and get something more out of her."

He checked himself a moment. Why was he so desperately anxious to get at the truth? The real criminal was—not Forbes, and by intuition he knew it. He was interested in clearing Helen, but not sufficiently interested to incriminate his wife for her sake. No, but she had beaten him so often with whips that it was not unpleasant to reflect that he might soon have a scorpion to retaliate with if he chose, which motive was altogether too subtle for the little gentleman's finding, and he fell back in despair on the less accurate but more obvious one of his desire for the truth at all costs.

"I haven't got much out of her yet," said Dickie ruefully, "but it's easy to get into the house. I'll take a room."

"*Of course* you will," said Mr. MacArthur, with a sounding slap on Dickie's slim shoulder, after which Dickie fled incontinently, leaving the elder gentleman to make his excuses for him with what success he might. For one thing he was anxious to follow Forbes to London as quickly as possible; for another, to face Mrs. MacArthur in his new character of full-blown conspirator was altogether beyond him.

XVI

THE success that attended his efforts as an amateur detective was to Dickie's simple soul nothing short of amazing. Mrs. Wickens' "drawing-room floor" was vacant, and Dickie showed so undiplomatic an anxiety to become its tenant that the price for that privilege went up, in the astute mind of his prospective landlady, by leaps and bounds.

"'Tis a very nice room, sir; cheerful and quiet, too, as one may say," offering both qualifications in her uncertainty as to which might be most to the "gentleman's" taste, "and the bedroom opening out of it is most convenient, sir, I assure you. Nice outlook, sir," as Dickie peeped shudderingly into a sooty well, decorated with empty tins and broken brickbats, where a forlorn and leafless tree pointed black and despairing fingers at the brooding London sky. "I'm sure in the spring-time when the leaves is out you'd think you was quite in the

country, you would indeed. Them's good holygraphs, sir," as Dickie peered shortsightedly at the slabs of brilliant colour that adorned the walls, "brightens up the place wonderful, don't they?"

"H'm, Scripture subjects, I see! Accounts for their being called 'holygraphs,' doesn't it? And—and what may your terms be, Mrs.—er—Wickens, did you say?"

"Six guineas a week, sir," with a gasp at her own temerity.

"Yes," said Dickie undismayed.

"With extras, sir," measuring her tether cautiously as she proceeded: "linen two and six, an' lights two and six, an' firing, of course, as you have it, sir, an' castors two and six, an attendance—arf a guinea, an' boots, sir, so much a pair." She hesitated. How much dare she say a pair?

"Yes," said Dickie again, still smiling and undismayed.

Sudden suspicion dawned in the good lady's eye. Were his methods suggestive of those of the clown in the pantomime, who acquiesces serenely in every extortion only to finish with the cheerful assurance, "Oh, the price doesn't matter! We don't mean to pay!" Dickie saw the look and his coveted rooms slipping out of his fingers. With a gasp he realised its cause.

"Then—er—I suppose I can take them for a week, certain, and pay the week in advance," counting out six sovereigns and six shillings upon the very insecure lodging-house table as he spoke.

"Which I'm sure is very good of you, sir," said the widow all smiles again, "and, of course, a week's notice. You understand that, sir."

"Oh, of course, a week's notice," echoed Dickie hurriedly agreeable. After which there was no obstacle to his entering at once upon his tenancy.

The day wore away and nothing happened. Mrs. Wickens brought up the modest chop and potato—that was all she could suggest or all he could think of for his lunch—and duly presented him with the latchkey, which conferred upon him right of egress and ingress to number 41A Doughty Street, but there was no

trace of Forbes. Had she gone already? Had she never come to London at all? Had he lost sight of her for ever? Dickie stood so long with his door slightly open and his ear to the crack that it was a wonder he did not suffer from aural catarrh for the rest of his natural life; but still no Forbes. His excitement sank to zero as his hopes died out one by one. He threw himself into a chair wrongfully described as "easy"—a chair with a painfully prominent spring and a bulge in the stuffing, and sat in the dusk and thought. The pleasant rattle of tea-cups roused him, followed by a voice, prim but familiar, just outside his door, Forbes herself was bringing in his tea.

With a spring he sought the shelter of his bedroom, that he might assure himself of her identity through a cautious crack in the folding-doors, at the same time concealing his own. Forbes laid his tea-tray on the insecure table and pattered softly downstairs again, all unsuspecting, and Dickie slipped cautiously after her. He ran down the grimy street, his hat on the back of his head, his latchkey clutched firmly in his hand, and though his battle was fought on a moral and not a physical battlefield, though his quest were nothing but the harmless, necessary policeman, and his methods such as would hardly have commended themselves to the exponents of the tenets of chivalry in any time but our own, never did knightlier heart burn fiercer to avenge fair lady's wrong, and that without any taint of hope of reward for himself in the background.

It happened to be just the time when one set of policemen leave their beats and another take them up, and one genial Robert, stout, placid, and a thought important, was yawning lazily at the corner preparatory to wending his way homeward to his tea. Dickie rushed up to him.

"I want you to come with me, just a moment," he announced breathlessly.

"An' where-to, sir, an' what for?" asked Robert, stolid and half suspicious.

"Just up here, a moment, you've nothing to do but—just show yourself. You'll come?"

In the hollow of Dickie's slender nervous hand was a bright yellow gleam. The eye of the constable swept over it, unseeing

and unmoved; but when one has a salary of twenty-four shillings a week, and a wife and children to keep out of it, half a sovereign is half a sovereign—and sometimes a good deal more.

"It's a bit irregular, sir, I'm not supposed——"

"You've nothing in the world to do but stand still and show yourself!" argued Dickie breathlessly. Then suddenly aware of yielding in O39B's eye, "Wait just a moment!" and he dashed into a tiny stationer's shop near, demanded a half-penny sheet of blue foolscap, paid sixpence for it, and dashed out again.

"Hold that *so!*" rapidly folding it and thrusting it into the constable's hand; "now come along."

They came along, the man of law's military footfall echoing on the greasy pavement under the London dusk.

"Lord, man," said Dickie irritably, "can't you go a bit softer?"

The constable looked distinctly injured; was not the training of all his life against it? Every stone step in the first flight of number 41A Doughty Street echoed, to Dickie's shrinking ear, under his martial tread, so carefully calculated to keep evil-doers informed of his whereabouts, but they reached the drawing-room floor together in safety.

"Now," said Dickie, opening one half of his folding-doors, and stationing his ally for the time being just inside it, "stand there and show your paper."

He rang the bell. Forbes answered it, and for the second time in her virtuous life found the door locked upon her.

She had lifted the tea-tray up before she noticed the fact or recognised Dickie. Her quiet observant eyes widened and fixed, and her jaw dropped ever so little.

"Lor', Mr. Tiark," she said faintly.

Dickie nodded at her with much satisfaction.

"I've come to speak to you," he told her cheerfully. "So has he."

At sight of the man in blue, with his paper well to the fore, Forbes set the tea-tray down again with a crash and dropped into the nearest chair.

"You see him?" asked Dickie, his words tripping with

excitement. "He's come for you. Tell me the truth—and he shan't touch you."

"But—he's got—a warrant!"

"I'll burn it!" with a magnificent contempt for the law and its majesty, "if you'll do as I want you to."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Tell the truth," said Dickie again.

"Well," said Forbes slowly, though her teeth chattered, "I suppose I'd better. What use will you make of it if I do?"

"N-n-none whatever," stammered Dickie, "as far as you are concerned; it isn't you I want to punish. That's right, isn't it, 039B?"

"Quite right, sir," agreed 039B, a touch of astonished amusement at such very novel methods creeping into his eyes in spite of himself.

"I wouldn't have told anything," Forbes went on sullenly, "but for what she said last night. She always told me she would keep me out of it till last night, and last night she said I was a fool to ever believe she could, and, of course, I must stand by what I had done. So I'd better tell what I did and how I came to do it."

"Yes, you had better," agreed Dickie grimly.

"She had two keys to that cabinet," Forbes went on, "and she gave me one before she went away."

"Whom do you mean by *she*?" inquired Dickie, sternly judicial.

"Mrs. MacArthur. She told me to wait till Miss Thorneycroft set off for a long day all to herself—she often did that; she was a wonder to walk, and then take anything I could get of hers to wear, and run up town and pawn the pearls. She told me where to go and what name to give, and I gave her the ticket when she came home. She—she paid me for my trouble."

"Handsomely?"

"Well, yes, I suppose you'd call it handsomely."

"And you could lend yourself to such a wicked, malicious, dastardly scheme against an innocent girl who had never done you any harm, that every one loved——?"

"I didn't love her particularly," with acid emphasis, "she was too 'aughty for me. I don't mean that she wasn't civil and pleasant-like, and well-spoken every way, but she treated me just like one of the other servants, and I'd always been friends with the companions before."

"So you tried to ruin her, and you have ruined yourself instead."

Forbes moistened her dry lips with her tongue.

"Mr. Tiark, what are you going to do?" she asked.

"Nothing, if you will do as I want you to."

"But—I've done it!"

"Not entirely. Set all this down in writing, sign it with us two as witnesses, and I give you my word it's the last you shall hear of it! Don't you see, woman, I can't punish you without dragging in Miss Thorneycroft? I'm not likely to want to do that, am I!"

"I shall lose my situation!"

"You'll do that anyway!"

"And my reference?"

"I'll give you any number of references."

The policeman coughed dubiously.

"She won't pay me my salary!"

"I'll pay your salary!"

"Lor, that young gent! 'E sticks at nothink, 'e don't," murmured the admiring Robert.

"I'll do it," said Forbes with a deep breath.

She did it, and when the detailed statement, signed, sealed, and delivered was safely in his breastcoat pocket, Dickie had time to admire himself.

"Really there's something in conjuring," he reflected complacently, "it does teach a man to use what wits he's possessed of! You may tell your sister," he went on to Forbes, "that I'll pay the current week and the week's notice, and I am going now."

Forbes went downstairs white and trembling. She had been forced by evil circumstance, incarnated as Dickie Tiark, to turn the point of a very dangerous weapon against her own spare bosom, and, in imagination, it pricked sharply every now

and then. He might promise her safety, he could not guarantee it, and what was she to do now?

Dickie turned to his policeman.

"That's for you," he said laying down the promised half-sovereign, "and here's another to help you hold your tongue. Now you may go, and"—with a genial smile—"thank you kindly."

O39B stood a moment looking shamefaced and gratified together.

"You'll not give the young woman anything, sir."

"I suppose I had better not?"

"Not a farden, sir, unless you want to turn that there statement into so much waste paper."

"It's as well you mentioned it," said Dickie aghast, "for I certainly should have done."

"You really mustn't, sir—not yet." With which cautious addition O39B once again turned his face tea-wards.

"Blest if I understand it all," he said passing a broad hand across his puzzled face. "One thing I know, I ain't earned a quid as easy as that this long time, and I han't done no great harm neither. It'll buy boots for the hull lot of 'em," by which it will be seen that O39B was a good father to his family, and had his share of troubles like the rest of us.

Dickie swallowed his little bill, extras and all, without so much as a wry face, and went straight down to Lasbie Croft. His behaviour when he reached it was, to say the least of it, peculiar. Advancing up the gravelled walk on tiptoe he applied a cautious eye to window after window, but whatever it was he sought he found no trace of it—to his infinite satisfaction. At last he summoned courage to step into the hall.

"Is—Mrs. MacArthur out?" he asked of the first servant he saw.

"Yes, sir. She is dining at the Manor."

"And Mr. MacArthur?"

"No, sir. He's in the study."

"Thanks!" said Dickie suddenly straightening himself. "I'll go to him."

Mr. MacArthur rose slowly at sight of him, and shook hands without a word.

"She's done it, old man," said Dickie solemnly.

"Miriam? H'm," with a groan.

"I—I can't stop here, of course, now I know that. She won't want me here any more, when I've done what I've come to do."

"What have you come to do?"

"To get a letter out of her, clearing Helen. She need not incriminate herself, but she must clear Helen or I shall be forced to use this."

"What?" asked Mr. MacArthur.

For answer Dickie put Forbes' statement into his hand. He read it through and handed it back in silence.

"Do you think she will?" asked Dickie eagerly.

"She's got to. But she won't love you, my boy."

"She may do the other thing!" Then suddenly heartwring by the misery on MacArthur's rubicund face, "I'm awfully sorry for you, old chap."

"Oh, thanks, I'm—used to it. I mean——" He shook his head forlornly and did not explain further what he meant. Dickie went on:

"I shall go down to the 'Duke of Marlborough' in the village. They'll put me up for the night. But I'm coming up again in the morning to get the letter. Hope you don't mind—I mean—what I've been forced to do."

"I! Oh, no, thanks, I don't mind at all," out of which speech Dickie extracted the hidden meaning, and realised dimly the extreme poverty of the words that occur to us in a crisis.

He went down to the "Duke of Marlborough," but the landlady met his request for accommodation with a dubious face.

"We've had two people already, Mr. Tiark, sir, and my best rooms is gone, sir, them as you're used to. I've only got a small one——"

"Why, who's got them?" asked Dickie blankly.

"An army gentleman, Carstairs his name is, sir, come with his——"

"Carstairs! Oh, then that's all right! He's a great friend of mine," with much confidence, though Carstairs, he knew, would be a good deal astonished to hear it. "He'll share his sitting-room with me, I'm sure, and be glad. This it?"

He pushed open the familiar door as he spoke. A lady, standing on the hearthrug, turned quickly at his entrance. He stood holding the door-handle, his jaw dropping slightly.

"Helen," he said half under his breath. "Helen!"

XVII

"PHILIP, I—I have to ask—can I have some more money?"

It was the evening before the day on which Dickie had successfully run Forbes to earth in Doughty Street. Helen stood in Philip's own particular sanctum, his writing-table, covered with tidily arranged piles of papers, between herself and her brother-in-law. Her request was abrupt, but only because it was embarrassed. Philip pulled his cheque book towards him with a smile.

"How much?" he asked.

"I think ten pounds will be plenty."

He wrote a cheque for twenty, and tossed it over with a kindly look. It was an old bone of contention between those two that Helen would not permit him to make her a regular and definite allowance, which, as he argued, would spare her the humiliation of asking for every penny she wanted, and him the awkwardness of giving it. But Helen had an odd sense, born of our Romanist ancestors' fondness for penance and our Puritan ancestors' belief in the necessity for self-discipline, that the humiliation, arising as it did out of her own wilfulness, was an evil to which she was bound to submit, and in vain Philip advanced the argument that she had no right to inflict discomfort upon him also. He had tried the experiment of placing a certain sum in Anita's hands for Helen's use, but Anita's hands had a way of holding tight all that came into them, and, as the sum never got any further, Philip stopped it, an unexpected development Anita regarded with much resentment.

"And I am going up to town to-morrow," Helen went on, folding up her cheque thoughtfully. "Philip," suddenly breaking off, "why do you always give me twice as much as I ask for?"

"Because you always ask for half as much as you really require!" answered Philip, laughing. "Going up to town you say, Nell? What for?"

"I—I have some shopping to do."

"H'm," said Philip. "That's not your real reason," he added to himself.

"And"—with a look straight and steady—"I may be obliged to stay all night."

"Go to Claridge's, if you do. They know me there."

"Very well. Thank you. You are very good to me, Philip," she added quickly under her breath.

"I wish you would let me be!" he said as quickly. And Helen was gone.

The shopping, though not entirely the myth he thought it, was not, as Philip had divined, Helen's chief reason for her trip to town. She had formed the resolution during the past few days of placing the whole history of her unfortunate marriage before a lawyer, using, of course, fictitious names and dates. It might be that his experienced eye would discern for her—for them both—a way of escape. The hope once planted in her heart flourished and grew amazingly. It must be that fetters so easy, so terribly easy to put on, could be as easily put off. It was surely possible that a position, taken up under a misapprehension by both of them, could be escaped from.

Her heart was beating quickly but buoyantly as she sat about four o'clock in the afternoon in a large handsome room on the ground floor of Lincoln's Inn, telling a plain unvarnished tale to a decidedly interested listener. The lawyer was elderly and acute, and after the first few sentences perfectly well aware that it was his attractive client's own history which he was hearing. The fact diminished neither his attention nor his interest. Helen concluded her narrative and awaited his verdict.

Yes, decided the authority, there was a chance, just a chance. If all the facts were laid before the proper tribunal, if it were to be acknowledged that she married under a threat, there was just a chance that the ceremony might be set on one side. But the frankest acknowledgment of every detail and motive would

be imperative; unpleasant results would have to be faced, the fullest investigation courted. Helen stood up suddenly.

"I—I couldn't bear it," she said very low.

"You couldn't," agreed the lawyer. "My advice to you," he went on gravely, "is to make the best of—a bad bargain. I'm afraid it is all you can do. May I ask if there is anything else? Any other cause of offence against him—in your mind, I mean."

"No," said Helen thoughtfully, "that is—the only thing. But it could hardly be worse," she added quickly.

The lawyer smiled.

"May I assure you," he said gently, "that other wives have both more—and worse—to forgive?"

"Yes," said Helen quickly, "but at least they feel that they are wives."

"You are his wife."

"Not by his wish. Don't you see that it is for him I feel—that it is for his sake—chiefly——"

"I wouldn't waste my pity on him if I were you," said the lawyer, grim and gallant together. "And now, if there is any further development, if you have any more to tell me——"

"I will come again? Oh, yes, I shall be very glad." And the next minute she was out in the chill afternoon, where the setting sun shot breaths of pink and lavender through the misty, smoky London atmosphere, and the never ceasing rumble of the traffic rose and fell like the roar of the distant sea upon her ears.

There was no need to go to Claridge's for the night, for there was nothing further to detain her in town. She would take a cab to King's Cross and catch the five o'clock train north. She would not reach home much before midnight, and Anita would probably protest again that her hours were barely respectable; but chilled, tired, and depressed as she was, the one thing that mattered seemed to get home as quickly as possible. She took the wrong turning on coming out of Lincoln's Inn, and made her way towards Holborn through a neighbourhood that was quite strange to her, and that struck her as being more than a little "queer"; but, absorbed in her own thoughts and naturally

courageous, Helen took little notice of its queerness; and even when two evil-looking men jostled her rather roughly in passing, accepted their muttered apology with entire cordiality. A hansom hailed in Holborn carried her swiftly to King's Cross, and there, with the great grimy terminus behind her and the unutterable dreariness of the Gray's Inn Road in front, she put her hand in her pocket to pay her fare. Purse, handkerchief, all were gone. With a gasp she remembered the men who had jostled her, and turned a blank face on her coachman.

"I—I can't pay you. I have had my pocket picked. I haven't a penny."

"Well," said the man slowly, "you're a queer sort of lady, you are!"

At the suggestion of suspicion, of veiled insult in his manner, Helen's nerves sprang like steel. She beckoned to a policeman standing near.

"I have had my pocket picked, I cannot pay my cab fare, and the man is inclined to be insolent," she explained quickly. "I am, however, willing to leave him this," slipping a gold bangle from her wrist, "as an earnest of my intention to pay him if you think it safe. Is it?"

"Quite safe, ma'am. You give him your address and he'll give his; I know him an' where he lives, too, an' when you send his fare he'll send your bracelet. That's so, ain't it, Jim?"

But Jim looked suddenly shamefaced.

"I don't want no bracelet," he said slowly, "if the lady'll tell me where she lives and promise me my fare."

Helen felt for her card-case, but that, too, had vanished.

"You must write it down," she said with an excited smile. "If you had been civil I would have sent you more."

"Well, if that ain't too bad," grumbled the aggrieved Jehu. "I warn't uncivil, an' you can't say so, not honest, can you now?"

"I'm not so sure about that," said Helen severely, and the next moment the squalor, the dirt, the dusk and the smells were all about her again, and no one in all that great, crowded city was lonelier than she. What was to be done now? The return half of her ticket was in her stolen purse. She might return to

Lincoln's Inn and lay her difficulty before the solicitor she had just quitted, but after having given him a name she acknowledged was fictitious she shrank from that course. Suddenly an idea struck her. The light coat she was wearing had many pockets. It might be that in one of them——. A two-shilling piece, a shilling and five-pence in coppers rewarded her hurried search. Never was three and five-pence more welcome. What should she do with it? What was three and five-pence? It was one thing—the exact fare to Lasbie. The coincidence decided her, as little circumstances, insignificant in themselves, decide the lives of all of us. She would go to Lasbie. Mrs. Dickinson at the "Duke of Marlborough" knew her and would take her in, and Mr. MacArthur would lend her all the money she could possibly require.

It was nearly six when Helen stepped on to the platform at Lasbie, but twilight lasts a good hour longer in the country than in London, and it was not yet dark.

"No gun-case come down for me?"

The quick question reached her clear and sharp on the keen air, and the voice was terribly familiar. So were the broad lean shoulders and the dark head, well set on a massive bronzed throat, not ten feet to her left hand. Their owner swung sharply round as though he felt the sudden breathless look that had fallen on his back. He raised his cap and came up to her.

"You down here?" was all he said.

"Yes. I—I came to speak to Mr. MacArthur. I am going to Mrs. Dickinson at the 'Duke of Marlborough.'"

"I am staying at the 'Duke of Marlborough,' too," he told her slowly. "Funny, isn't it! In fact I'm afraid I've got her only decent rooms. You—you will allow me to offer you—a civility you would accept from any other acquaintance, and give them up to you?"

"Thank you, I couldn't think of it."

"You must think of it. I can go to the 'Half Moon,' a little beershop at the other end of the village—you can't."

"Thank you," said Helen again. "But I should not think of such a thing."

And what else was she to think of in its place? Not for worlds would she have let him know the dilemma in which she stood, have accepted either his assistance or his sympathy, and Mrs. Dickinson's roof, with him under it, was no place for her. He studied her changing face; under all its proud steadfastness dismay lay only half hidden. Then he spoke, hoarse and low:

"Don't you trust my explanations? Are you afraid of me? Because, by Heaven, if I really thought so I'd throw myself under the first passing train."

There was a touch of heartwring appeal, almost of despair, under all the impetuosity, the almost boyish extravagance of the speech, that went to Helen's heart in spite of herself. It was true he deserved hard things, scorn, contempt, reprobation, even as she gave them, but did he deserve all the hard things she gave? Here was one at least that she had never offered him. She lifted frank eyes to his.

"I never even thought of such a thing."

"Then prove it!" with pale lips.

She turned with decision. It meant a two miles' walk by his side, where she had certainly believed no possible combination of circumstances would ever have compelled her to walk again, but common justice is the right even of an evil-doer. The October evening was misty and still, and though the glories of crimson and russet were dimmed by the dusk, the odours of the rich Mid-England landscape hung in the coolness of the air, and hinted at the beauties amid which, wrapped in peace, contentment, the sense of fruition, earth was sinking to its winter sleep. To Carstairs, though of conversation, properly so-called, there was little or none, a keen and subtle pleasure existed in the mere fact of walking beside anything so swift, so alert, so exquisitely feminine, yet so magnificently strong, as Helen in the glow and glory of her perfect young womanhood. Had there been the same accord between them, mentally and morally, as there was physically, as there might have been but for the moment's baseness in which, to save his life, he had lost all that made his life worth saving, what might not that walk have been for him! Regret, bitter and unavailing regret, for the mistake, the false step, the deliberate sin against

a man's honour, not to be forgotten or forgiven, shot keenly, cruelly, through and through him. And there was no place of repentance, though he sought it bitterly and with tears. One thing he did not know, though the knowledge would but have sharpened the stings of his remorse, that Helen sought it also. To forget the unforgettable, to forgive the unforgivable! Ardent though she might, though she did desire it, the power to do so was not hers. The thing was—and would always be.

He turned aside from the high road as they neared Lasbie village; a short cut through a copse of oaks and some fields would bring them out close beside Mr. Dickinson's stable yard. As they reached the stile leading from the copse to the fields, he stayed her with a motion of his hand. It was very still, so still that an occasional acorn, falling with a swift rustle through the crisping leaves and reaching the ground with a thud, startled her. So many acorns, each with the potentialities of an oak! Where are the forests we ought to have? So many chances raining down on all sides of us, each carrying the possibilities of happiness! Where are the lives we ought to lead? A sinuous curve in the tall dying grasses under the hedge before her attracted her attention. As she watched it out sprang a handsome dog-fox with a chicken in his mouth.

"There," said Carstairs laughing; "there goes an argument against the sport of kings. I thought I saw him."

"But there is a compensation fund, isn't there?"

"Well, there is and there isn't. There is a fund, certainly, but it does not come anywhere near compensation." Which conversation was no farther removed from the true inwardness of their thoughts than a good many of our own are every day of our lives.

"Come!" said Carstairs shortly, vaulting the stile and offering his hand.

Helen accepted it, taught by her adventure on the sands. It was an odd experience for these two who had buried the dagger up to the hilt in each other's hearts, and odder was to follow. Mrs. Dickinson turned from his crisp explanations that he

wished to give up his rooms to a lady, and recognised Helen standing behind him.

"Why, Miss Thorneycroft, my dear, is it you?" she asked in evident pleasure.

Carstairs looked from one to the other.

"I'll just run upstairs and put my traps together," he said.

"Why, where's he going?" asked the landlady blankly.

"To the 'Half Moon,' I think."

"But, lor', my dear, he needn't. I've got another little room as 'ud do beautiful for one night."

"Oh, but I think he would rather," said Helen quickly.

"But not without his tea, surely, an' him gi'en up his rooms to you, an' a friend an' all. He's had nothing but a couple of sandwiches since nine this mornin'; he told me so hisself, and he'll get nothing fit to touch at the 'Half Moon.' It's easy enough to put another cup and saucer; you'll ask him to stay to his own tea, Miss Thorneycroft?"

The sight of a savoury dish of eggs and bacon on its way to the tea-table deepened the dismay in the good lady's face. Helen turned resignedly as Major Carstairs came down. The burying of the hatchet, for the time being, was inevitable.

"You will have a cup of tea before you go?"

He looked up quickly from cramming some things into his bag.

"With you?"

"With me."

"Thank you," he said quietly. "I'm ravenously hungry," he added, laughing with a touch of boyishness, of *naïveté*; that brought a pained smile to Helen's lips. It sharply recalled the charm she had been conscious of before—before he lost all charm for her for ever.

It was odd to find that she knew his little likes and dislikes; odder to reflect that the place she filled at the head of his table was her rightful place; oddest of all the lurking remembrance that she was—his wife! Did he also remember it? She dare not raise her eyes, lest they should reveal her question all too clearly, and meanwhile he steadily lowered his own, lest she should read in them how impossible he found it to forget. With

a gasp Helen clutched at possibilities. Perhaps! It was only perhaps! To escape her thoughts she dashed into words, which again were only flesh and bones to clothe another thought.

"Major Carstairs, how is it you are here?"

His face clouded suddenly.

"I'm not easy about Braithwaite," he said slowly. "I don't go to Meltham for obvious reasons, but I come here occasionally and find out how things are going on as far as I can. I meant to see him this time if I could. He is expected home daily, but he hasn't come yet."

Helen asked no further questions, there was evidently nothing definite for her to hear, and she dare not look too closely into a future big with terrible possibilities. The evening was drawing on. It had been seven before they commenced tea, it was now eight—past eight—and still Major Carstairs lingered. He had a right to linger, he would have been more than man if the idea had not occurred to him, as he would have been less had he presumed upon it. Truth was, the painful pleasure of Helen's society, even unwillingly accorded, was more than he could readily find strength to forego. It was only the fear lest he should really see the hideous suspicion of him and his motives he had fancied he read in her eyes once before this evening that drove him away in the end.

It was nearly nine o'clock when Dickie pushed open the door of Helen's sitting-room. The scent of Major Carstairs' cigar still clung about it, Major Carstairs himself, unduly elated by the march of events this evening, was whistling cheerily as he hunted for some forgotten piece of portable property in the room above. It was more than enough for Dickie. Without waiting to make inquiries or hear explanations he fled incontinent, carrying his suspicions with him.

(To be continued.)

A LIGURIAN IMPRESSION

MY enthusiasm is all of a city of a hundred hills, a grey pearl embosomed in loveliness of sea and mountain, of shifting colour, of lovely light ; a miniature Napoli from without, in its crescent seen from the sea ; only compacter, smaller, more wholesome : and within bearing a character in its people, its language, and its aims different from all other Italian cities even as its history has been from time immemorial a thing apart.

This is Genoa, the self-sufficient dictatress of some minor factors in the history of Northern Italy.

All that Ligurian coast, of which she is the centre, is a veritable smile of God, an inspiration, a dream of colour ; with the smack of the troubadours clinging to it yet. These *trouvères* were obviously people of excellent sense and a most irreproachable taste, loving passionately soft atmosphere, all the beauty that is incepted of ripe sunshine, the fulness of a southern land. Coming south from Lago di Garda, the fullest extent of their westward wanderings, Messer Lafranc Cigala and others of his ilk doubtless made love pilgrimages by orange gardens, then as now sea-lapped ; and composed chansons, charming and countless, to maidens who dwelt in stern towers built to keep out that hardy foe, that Oriental of discernment, the indomitable Saracen.

Unlike Northern seas, the Mediterranean, with a charm peculiarly its own, never cuts the horizon with a sharp line of uniform colour. Climb the Castellaccio at any time of day—for its glories are by no means all for dawn and sunset—and looking to the right towards brilliant little Alassio, the curiously high horizon line may possibly surprise and delight you, first as the palest of pale silver threads, changing in mid-ocean to oxidise, then to lilac, and over towards Spezia becoming a solid gracious purple.

Castellaccio is a hill of more magics than one. Occasionally

it will display to the fortunate a most rare enchantment. Under certain atmospheric conditions a pale luminous reflex of houses, sea, and mountains shapes itself mirage-wise in the great cloud cumuli which sail in lazy splendour over that summer sea, where for a whole day you may watch a solitary sail progressing till night drops a curtain between it and you.

Turn your back, if you can, on the ocean ; and the Appenines, with a mute yet eloquent language, testify to the most careless soul surely something of their power of inspiration over Pouissin and the rest. Nowhere can you find lovelier hillsides, though at the outset, casually, there may seem little exuberance about the quiet-toned landscape. But this silvery hue is the effect of thousands of twisted olives, which clothe the reddish dry earth with grey velvet. Yet the sunlight falls between bent trunks, catches curious white lights upon the little delicate pointed leaves, illuminates an unexpected flare of colour about some peasant's dress, groping in the dry grass for fallen fruit. Here at the southern spur of these most rare hills, every mountain peak has a slender and gracious shape ; their valleys in beautiful recurring succession are cups filled with amethyst shadow ; there is no detriment to be found in man's touches of stucco, or warm little Roman bricks marking villages and forts perched high.

Modern earthworks and forts dot the hills ; there are many ancient ones, bearing witness to this city's irascibility in the past ; Genoa, in fact, was far from enjoying a pleasant and neighbourly reputation in the Middle Ages, and Dante, with excellent frankness, has given his conception of her people :

" Ahi Genovesi uomini diversi,
D'ogni costume, e pien' d'ogni magagna ;
Perchè non siete voi del mondo spersi ? "

The city had her Dorias, her pomps and pride ; her Guelphs and Ghibellines and constant warfare ; her strife with another proud republic across the seas which did its best to accomplish what Dante, with his cold and accurate judgment, would consider just.

In that other Doge's palace, which blinks across at the shining

white Salute over a stretch of shimmering Adriatic, hangs a huge canvas setting forth one of the stupendous battles for supremacy of trade which marked from time to time the prorenaissance period of Genoa—or marked it more passionately, more obviously perhaps, then than since, though the trading instinct has not changed. The goal, the attainment of which was a personal and likewise a collective effort then, is the same now that a huge township of modern flats has slipped away up the heights from the broad sixteenth-century streets that Alessi constructed.

The Ligurian speech was not the only difference between the Genoese and the beauty-loving, procrastinating Italian, whose motto is "Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow," with the result that he lives happy and dies poor; so when the rest has stood still Genoa has prospered exceedingly. Yet in prospering she has likewise suffered by rule of the world, and not least at the hands of the nineteenth-century diplomacy. In the seething pot of young history of Italian liberty, the fine old republic panted out its last breath, and its bitterest pill was its ultimate handing over to Sardinia. Political extinction comes hard to a proud nation, and it takes a brave soul to swallow wrong; yet Genoa did this, and was grand enough to give unqualified welcome in the years to come to Charles Albert's heir.

Right and left of her, full stops in the rhythm of white, ancient stuccoed town, headland and shadowy gorge there occur perpetually along the Ligurian coast the Saracen towers which with beacons of alarm once flared warning of the down-swooping Infidel, whose galleys with untoward presumption frequently harried Christian seas.

One such town, tower, and gorge is unforgettable: San Stéfano al Mare, and the gorge is the best of it.

There is no memory of the torrent in summery November; pack mules, gaily caparisoned, thread unconcernedly its quiet bed, amongst still pools, wherein you can catch sudden glimpses of sun-dappled peaks; and if you wait till the sturdy beasts are gone you can be luxuriously alone in a wonderful purple solitude. There is a little grey village set as giddily high as an eagle's nest

amongst the crags up yonder, and a drift of smoke across it to give a hint of life ; as does a note too now or then of a human voice wafted across, perhaps with the strong perfume of violets and pinks ; otherwise yours is an enchanted solitude, and the reeds will whisper strange things to you. Perhaps you may catch the spell ; then there is no more satisfaction for you away from this land of beautiful quiescence, of summer susurrence, radiant with blossom, golden with ripe fruit. If the enchantment is for you, it will draw you more than home or kindred, growing all sufficient ; it will hold you in sweet but very resolute bondage.

Yet San Stéphano is only one of scores of villages along this radiant coast. It springs from the very sea itself, gleaming as an ancient pearl, warm in transparent creamy light, its campanile cutting the sky ; and the exuberance of colour, if too much exuberance there be, is toned by the gentle sweep of olives creeping up the slopes behind.

To see the sea-horses frolic round San Stéphano in the sunset, frolic around the roots of the actual church itself, is worth a year of life elsewhere. They have long manes, the pagan, inconsequent foam creatures, white as driven snow ; and they make their gambols in the shallow emerald water close to the shore. But within San Stéphano's gaunt grey church, dim with ancient dust, poor to pathos, there are no sea horses, only the thunder of the waves brings you to realities. New Italy has her stern realities. That she shall keep her place among the nations is a task which forces a responsibility directly upon the shoulders of every peasant, upon those of the meanest fisherman who puts out for his catch in these sunny Ligurian waters. He eats his supper perhaps in a cavernous room—San Stéphano is full of such—amongst whose shadows one poor candle is the merest travesty of light ; yet he must pay his tax for this luxury, for his bit of salt taken with his polenta, for the handful of sardines, fruit of his own long patience during the day at sea. This is part of the price of the spell of progress whose mark is in the names which universally throughout the country bear significant testimony of the new Liberalism and an united Italy ; names which defining

the petty streets and alleys of mean villages, are affixed in marble to the dignified sixteenth-century thoroughfares of Genoa la Superba—to palaces bearing behind their walls the secrets of three hundred years. Behold in this a talisman of evolution at which ancient Genoa, proud of its unique isolation from the rest of Italy, would have lifted hands of scorn.

If it pleases your humour, you may take this thing as Time's revenge for the arrogance of principalities; or, again, as the fulfilment of a nobler destiny. Very assuredly it is the outcome of human tenacity, struggle, and privation, and a holy cause.

Something of the first of it occurred one Sunday afternoon in April 1821, when Giuseppe Mazzini, a boy of sixteen, walked down the Strada Nuova in Genoa with his mother, and "a man with a fiery glance" held out a handkerchief to them, crying out:

"For the refugees of Italy."

To Mazzini, destined to be the first genius of the grandest piece of history of the nineteenth century, this incident was the inception of new possibilities for his country; it was like a match to tinder in the precocious brain of the youth marked out for the honour of being the regenerator of systems.

"Young Italy," Mazzini was to write later, "closed the period of political sects, and initiated that of educational associations. Great revolutions are the work of principles rather than bayonets."

So much he lived to prove. His mother that afternoon dropped money into the hand of the man. Young Giuseppe, pondering, asked himself why Italians "should do nothing to help themselves," an advance of thought for which he was in a few years to taste the irksomeness of imprisonment in the fortress of Savona, of which now for a sou you can buy a charming water-colour facsimile on one of Manuel Wielandt's Riviera post-cards.

"Via Ugi Bassi," "Piazza Maniu," "Via Cavour," here are names to stir your blood—"the soldier monk," the heroic defender of Venice, whom his people so loved that when the city fell their cry was not for themselves, but for him—"Our

poor father, how much he has suffered": Cavour, the outwitted of the wily strategist, Napoleon III.

To return to younger times.

The Renaissance burst gloriously upon the new Genoa. Its palaces are pieces of noble art; Galeazzo Alessi answers for much of the architecture, and he was the exponent of sound taste, a worthy pupil of such a master as Michel Angelo. The result of his conception is a refined and a dignified grandeur, a sense of greatness insisted upon in glimpses of vast marble vestibules, huge shallow staircases of pure and shining Carrara, magnificent façades, wealth, but never over-exuberance, of ornament. It is quite likely that the incongruity of a modern crowd will strike you more than a little as it goes shifting and hurrying in the shadow of these sarcophagi of history. Far more adequate here you might think those gleaming little figures from Canale's pictures — peruked, cloaked, high-heeled, and obviously wicked—than in their own setting of his precise greyish-green Venetian canvas. A hundred and seventy-five years before Giuseppe Mazzini, John Evelyn also walked down the Strada Nuova, and observed:

"The inhabitants of this city are much affected by the Spanish mode and stately garb. From the narrowness of the streets they use sedans and litters and not coaches."

Evelyn forgets to be stilted, and, for him, is curiously enthusiastic over "those delicious villas of S. Pietro d'Arena, which present another Genoa to you—the ravishing retirement of the Genoese nobility."

Concerning the Palazzo Doria, the inducements of the modern guide-book to the traveller are almost identical with a note of Mr. Evelyn's:

"One of the greatest (Palazzi) here for circuit is that of the Prince d'Orias, which reaches from the sea to the summit of the mountains; the house is most magnificently built without, nor less gloriously furnished within, having whole tables and bedsteads of massy silver, many of them set with achates, onyxes, cornelians, lazulis, pearls, turquises, and other precious stones."

The same to-day, yesterday, a hundred years ago, a hundred

years before that again. Its immutability, that is the charm of Italy; the languorous charm that insinuates itself into your veins till it becomes a passion, and parting with it actual pain. And along this Ligurian coast this enchantment is the stronger, because of the "Joys of Italy in the perfume of oranges, citron, and jasmine flowers."

There is a place called Taggia not so very far from Genoa, dropped consummately into a cleft of the hills, that has the loveliest olive-yards, with the gold shine of ripe oranges breaking here and there through the thick impasto of opaque green. It is environed by acres of pinks and violets, and ingeniously catches and holds the sun in its deep valley, so that the water in the gorge never offends you in cold or grey monotony. The breath of other centuries is still warm upon your cheek in Taggia. It is best to see the ancient city first at evening time, when the palaces look dim, reticent, dignified, in the honourable age which has stained their marble to a warmish transparent brown; and the immense, lofty shops loom cavernously behind the spacious arcades. Doubtless Taggia had its history, but saving for tradition that page is turned; yet there remains a mute eloquence, an impressiveness: one is awed; the actual solid present proof of Time's passage strikes home in the actual touch and feel of what Time cannot destroy; the vitality is gone, but the perfect shell remains.

Here, in a curved, green jalousied ancient house on the Pantano, lived and died Giovanni Ruffini, who bequeathed in "Dr. Antonio" one of the pleasantest novels of the century, instinctive with the spirit of the Riviera its author so passionately loved; not the Riviera of modern fashionable life, but this radiant sea-lapped land, fertile in its entire glorious stretch from San Remo to Sestri Levante, with sometimes the lazy curl of the Mediterranean upon its strips of sand, sometimes a girdle of leaping foam, as where Nervi springs beautifully out of the very sea itself; and for ever in the bays emerald vies with purple, mauve with tender blue.

"This immensity of sea, smooth as glass, and rich with all the hues of a dove's neck; the bright green, the dark purple, the soft ultramarine, the deep blue of a blade of burnished steel,

there glancing in the sun like diamonds, here rippling into a lace-like net of snowy foam . . .

"Earth, sky, and sea mingle their different tones, and from their varieties, as from the notes of a rich full chord, rises one great harmony."

ETTA COURTNEY.

THE SONG OF A COMMONPLACE SOUL

I SHOULD not choose,
To grind out all the melody I meet
Upon a barrel organ in the street ;
But since I do,
Well ! one note here and there is fairly sweet.

I should not choose,
To plod along the common road, nor till
The barren garden of another's will ;
But since I must,
What use in looking back or standing still ?

I should not choose,
To love a quiet soul whose mean attire
No rhapsody of passion can inspire ;
But since I may,
I'll warm my heart before that homely fire.

I should not choose,
To have a blinded faith and dimly see
The shining promise of eternity ;
But since I have,
Perhaps God's charity will cover me.

A. E. JAMESON.

THE GOOSEBERRY AND THE GOBLIN

" I DON'T see how it's possible to refuse. She has been so good to me that it would be dreadfully ungrateful, Villikins."

His name was William Henry Turtell, but she always called him Villikins, because her name was Dinah. They had been married nearly three years, and their only cause for discontent was the absence of anything at which they could possibly grumble. Dinah did not feel this lack so much, but Villikins, being a man, had occasionally to invent excuses for a growl. It always did him good, and he felt better afterwards. Just now he was working himself up into a rage, no very easy task, as he was by nature sweet-tempered, but the letter his little wife held in her hand afforded sufficient reason for a flare-up ; so he thought—and she, as usual, entirely agreed with him.

The letter ran as follows :

" MY DEAREST CHILD,

I have been thinking a good deal about you lately, and wondering whether I could help you in any way. From what I hear your income is not more than sufficient for your present needs, and you ought to be laying by something for a rainy day. Would it be of any assistance if I came to live with you ? I would willingly pay half the expenses of your household, and should not in the least mind giving up my establishment for the pleasure of being with you. I do not think I should be in your way or any trouble, as I require so little waiting upon, and, if necessary, could bring my own maid. Let me know soon, dear, if this arrangement meets with your approval, and William's. It would be very nice to make my home with you and to feel that if you were ill I should be on the spot to nurse you.

" Your affectionate aunt,

" ELIZABETH DERING."

"We shall never be alone any more!" groaned Villikins, after reading it for the third time.

"She is such a dear old thing," murmured Dinah, softly but sadly.

"She might have more sense," snapped her husband testily.

"She means well," pleaded Dinah, and then after a pause continued: "But oh, it will be a nuisance. She has old-fashioned ideas; we shall disturb them, and she will never understand. The house won't be the same. There will always be present the third person singular, the odd one, the . . ." she hesitated for a word.

"The gooseberry!" interjected Villikins disgustedly. "Yes, we may as well resign ourselves to the fact, Dinah, that all our future is to be spent in the presence of a '— gooseberry!'"

He did not often use forcible language, and the one small word represented above by the dash struck a chill into Dinah's heart. It sounded a note of foreboding, and very heavily she set herself to answer her aunt's letter, trying to pretend a cordial acceptance of its offer that was far from sincere.

A few weeks later the gooseberry arrived.

She was a kind-looking, oldish lady with a prim but affectionate manner, and a terrible bump of neatness. Dinah felt her cheeks grow warm as the sharp spectacled eyes wandered over her rooms, noting every particle of dust, deprecating the position of Villikins' papers on several chairs and tables, taking in the crumpled window curtains, and a speck of rust on the fire-irons.

The young wife had been trained to rub and polish, to put tidy and watch for things out of place all her life, by this worthy woman who had brought her up, but since her marriage she was aware of having fallen into lax ways, partly on account of finding too much to do, partly because her husband objected to excessive tidiness. He said it always made him feel as if he were under a glass case, and he purposely left his goods and chattels lying about, "to make the place look home-like." Dinah had come to think as he did on this, as on every other subject, but now a sudden shame seized her under the reproach-

ful glance of Aunt Bessie, whose former influence had been so great. She apologised for her husband's cigar ashes and for the worsted hanging out of her work-basket as if these had been criminal offences. The consciousness that her dear aunt was unwelcome added an extra tinge of humility to her protestations, for she had a tender heart, and was really fond of the prim lady who had been the guardian of her early days. Not to want her now appeared unnatural and ungrateful, yet Dinah had to confess to herself it was the truth. A sense of compunction led her to extravagant caresses and floods of loving words, till Miss Dering glowed with pleasure. How delighted the darling child was to have her! she thought, inwardly resolving to be a comfort to her niece by looking after neglected household affairs and keeping things orderly.

Aunt Bessie was one of those amiable persons we occasionally meet who have absolutely no corners. Her personality was, so to speak, perfectly rounded, without seizable edges, points, or angles. One could never find a hole in her; she had not a fault, unless excess of virtue might be counted against her. The breath of suspicion had never dimmed the lustre of her name; no harsh word had ever been known to pass her lips; her reproofs had always been so sweetly delivered that no one could term her censorious. She admired everybody and everything, was full of enthusiasms, and, although she went to church regularly, was no Pharisee. It was quite impossible for any one to quarrel with her; all arrows of attack glanced off her imperturbable good nature as the sting of a wasp from marble. She was, in short, an immaculate woman, serene, clear-headed, kind-hearted, and a model housewife. Villikins, with the best will in the world, could find but one thing to bring against her.

She was always there!

That was the rub. He bore it patiently for some time, until somehow matters began to look ominous. The house seemed on stilts, its rigid order and routine became abominable. Meals were served to the stroke of the clock, and if he came in ten minutes late the viands were cold. Dinah had never a moment to spare; she was incessantly putting things to rights, and

when he protested, she turned to Aunt Bessie for arguments. Moreover, he began to fancy that while Miss Dering never lost her admirable tranquillity, Dinah's temper was not improving. She actually disagreed with him on several occasions and backed herself by her aunt's opinions, never expressed by that worthy lady in his presence. It was a terrible shock to him when his little wife asked him not to sit on the chair-covers or spill his tobacco ash on the carpet ; but worse was to come. One day she positively reuked him for leaving a soiled collar on his dressing-table ; and it must be admitted few men could stand *that* ! The worm turned. He said little, but the turn was there all the same, in his mind. Two days later he came back from town (his business was in the city, his home in the pleasing suburb of Brixton) carrying very carefully a small mysterious basket.

"I don't know what you will say my dear," he said to his wife, "but I could not refuse a present from my Uncle Richard, and here it is."

He had never called her "my dear" until lately, and she resented it very much. The term sounded to her so severely marital, a dutiful expression of endearment seldom employed till all sentiment is dead between a wedded pair. Before Aunt Bessie came he used to say "darling" or "Dinah duck" or something else sweet and silly. But this is a digression.

"Your Uncle Richard !" she exclaimed : "why, which one is that Villikins ? I don't remember his name."

"He is," replied Villikins, solemnly, one eye upon Aunt Bessie, "my rich bachelor uncle who went abroad. He has come home richer than ever, and seems to have taken a fancy to me, but he is so eccentric that he refuses to call on us. His one mania is animals, and he has given me this terrier pup on the understanding that I cherish it as a child of my own. He will probably add a cat, a kangaroo, and a young hyæna before long, but for the present he is content to let me off with this."

Thereupon Villikins produced from his basket a little warm heap of living velvet from which two bright eyes peered curiously. It was about a foot long and nearly all white, but had two liver-coloured spots, one near its right eye, and the

other encircling its tail, making that stumpy appendage (it had been shorn according to the dictates of an accursed fashion) look as if it had been stuck on with a dab of brown paste.

Dinah fell in love with it on the spot, and her affection was immediately reciprocated. The tiny soft thing tried to kiss her face, whined at her, scrambled all over her, pulled at her laces and told her plainly in its own language that she was the very person it had been longing for, recognising, no doubt, the eternal mother-spirit beneath her merely human and modish aspect. She took it to her heart, christened it Puck and ordered a bowl of warm milk. Aunt Bessie watched the little comedy in silence, offering only the remark that it was a strange present. She was not fond of animals; they were apt to disturb the even tenor of her way and offend her sense of delicacy. However, after asking many questions about the rich uncle, questions which were answered by Villikins with unblushing volubility and obvious relish, she quite understood the importance of guarding sacredly the canine gift.

"If anything were to happen to that dog," asseverated Villikins gravely, "all my expectations would fall to the ground;" and this was perfectly true.

Next day the puppy began those gambols which by-and-bye earned for him the not inappropriate cognomen of the "Goblin." Before any one was up he clambered out of his woolly-lined bed in the kitchen and dragged his small cumbersome body upstairs. In the hall he found Miss Dering's goloshes, which he promptly tore to shreds and then glutted himself on umbrellas. When the maid came down a scene of havoc greeted her horrified eyes. The roly-poly little culprit sat on the front-door mat with a piece of silk between his velvety paws, looking thoroughly delighted with himself. She whacked him and he howled, but not penitently, for the moment her back was turned he started on a fresh career of spoliation. He had managed to lick all the polish off a pair of Villikins' boots and leave the mark of his baby teeth on the toes before he was seized and shut up in the coalhouse, where he whined incontinently without ceasing for a minute.

The feelings of Miss Dering and her niece upon their arrival

downstairs may be better imagined than described. Aunt Bessie shed tears over her umbrella and Dinah joined in hysterically, and wanted to laugh. The hall was a sight for gods and men! She pointed to the wreckage with a would-be-tragic gesture when Villikins came down, and his heartless response was a roar of laughter, in which she finally had to join.

"You must keep perishable matter out of the way," he said, when he could speak. "All puppies are destructive, but I believe they're nothing to young hyænas. Master Puck will improve with age, and I've no doubt that in a year or two he will be quite a respectable member of society."

"A year or two!" echoed Aunt Bessie dismally: "do you mean to say that we shall have to endure such ravages for a year or two? Why, we shall be ruined!"

"Oh, dear no, we shan't," replied Villikins cheerfully. "We have only to put things where he cannot get at them."

While they were talking Dinah fetched the small villain from the coalhouse and appeared with him in her loving arms. He was black from head to foot, and left smudges all over her clean morning gown, but his fascination was so irresistible that she could do nothing but kiss his naughty silken head.

"He says he's berry sorry and won't do it never no more, the wicked pet," she murmured; and her aunt exclaimed more in sorrow than in anger—"Oh, Dinah!"

Later in the morning he escaped her watchful eyes and hoisted himself upstairs. By this time having worried the ears of a hassock and torn up two newspapers, he was a trifle tired and yearned for repose. So he pulled down a heap of Miss Dering's bed-clothes that were turned over chair-backs to air, and after much scrambling and twisting round, curled himself up in them deliciously. "This is something like comfort," he reflected as he chewed a bit of blanket languidly while composing his mind for sleep. He had no sooner dropped off, however, before the housemaid pounced upon him with a cry of fury, and he was carried off bodily, overwhelmed by smacks and insults, leaving behind a coaly impression of his infant limbs upon which Miss Dering had afterwards to lie, greatly to her disgust. She

shuddered at the contamination, but to change sheets or blankets oftener than once a week was against her most rigorous principles, and her bed linen had been fresh from the wash but two days previously.

On the following afternoon the goblin ate one of her best kid gloves which she happened to drop unawares. It was a nice new glove and probably tasty. For punishment he was shut up in a cupboard, but he cried so shrilly that they were soon glad to let him out. Full of gratitude, he made for Miss Dering's feet, and ripped a large jagged square piece out of her fine alpaca petticoat.

She bore it all like a saint, but her patience was beginning to tell on her. A nervous glance, a pale cheek, a terrified look in the eyes bespoke the inquietude that was undermining her spirit. Once she asked mildly whether it would not be proper to keep Puck in a kennel, but this was immediately vetoed by Villikins, who declared that nobody ever dreamt of treating a fox terrier so, and that his uncle would faint at the bare idea.

Thus the days wore on. Dinah became more and more infatuated with the small wretch that spoilt her clothes and absolutely prevented a tidy appearance in the house. She forgave him everything, as women will when they love, and it must be remembered that Dinah had no human babies upon whom to lavish all her motherliness. Furthermore, *l'enfant terrible*, as Villikins sometimes jocularly called him, was a new bond of union between the pair, who were in perfect sympathy over his exasperating but lovable qualities. He was a constant source of amusement and excitement; they never knew what he would be up to next; he was safe only when asleep, and was always ready for a bit of fun. His better side was shown in many little acts of affection and courage; he frightened away cats, and barked at tramps with a ferocity remarkable in one so young. And in time neither Villikins nor his Dinah could imagine what they should do without him. Their sentiments were not shared by Aunt Bessie.

She, poor old soul! soon found that there are cases in which three is company, four trumpery; and that this was one. From the depths of her order-loving nature she loathed this juvenile

canine anarchist, with his tearing, rampaging, devastating, dare-devil impudence. She did not find him engaging ; he made her life a burden. Yet she plainly saw it would never do for William to repudiate the animal given him by his rich eccentric uncle as a special mark of favour.

There was but a single course open to her.

"My dear child," she began nervously one day, when she and Dinah were alone at work. "My dear child, I hardly like to speak of it, but I am afraid I cannot remain with you, much as I love to be here. Brixton is very relaxing, and my health warns me that I require a more bracing district. You will not think me unkind if I leave you ?"

Dinah's heart gave a guilty throb of pleasure as she answered lovingly that dear Aunt Bessie's health must ever be her first consideration.

And that was the end of the "Gooseberry," who was soon afterwards reinstated as a much-loved relative and friend in a nice home of her own not too far away.

As for the "Goblin," he still holds a warm place in the affections of Villikins and Dinah, although his little cheeky nose has been put somewhat out of joint by another ravishing live plaything (*not* sent by the rich uncle) nearly as mischievous and even more lovable.

MARY L. PENDERED.

“WILD MUSK”

OUR wild flowers, the yellow in colour as a rule attracts me the least ; not because this colour is not beautiful to me, but only because of the numerous ungraceful weedy-looking and disagreeable smelling plants that produce yellow flowers—tansy, fleabane, ragwort, sow-thistle and I know not how many besides. All these were common in the Itchen Valley, where I spent the last half of the summer ; and others which were not ugly yet failed to attract—St. John's-wort, yellow loosestrife, &c. Yet, as the days and weeks went on and brought yet another conspicuous yellow waterside flower into bloom, which became more and more abundant as the season advanced, while the others, one by one, faded and failed from the earth, until during the last half of September it was in its fullest splendour, I was completely won by it, and said in my haste that it was the brightest blossom in all the Hampshire garland, if not the loveliest wild flower in England. Nor was it strange, all things considered, that I was so taken with its beauty, since, as every one will admit, it *is* beautiful ; and it was new to me, if not therefore had the additional charm of novelty ; and, finally, it was at its best when all the conspicuous flowers that give touches of brilliant colour here and there to the green of this greenest valley, including most of the yellow flowers I have mentioned, were faded and gone.

No minute description of this flower, *Mimulus luteus*, or “wild musk,” as it is locally named, need be attempted here. The large foxglove-shaped flowers grow singly on their stems among the leaves ; but the shape is nothing, and is scarcely seen or noticed twenty-five to fifty yards away, the proper distance at which to view the blossoming plants. The colour is everything. There is no purer, no more beautiful yellow on any of our wild flowers, from the primrose and the almost equally pale, exquisite blossom which we stupidly name “dark mullein” in our books, to the intensest pure yellow of the marsh marigold.

But, although purity of colour is the chief thing, it would not of itself serve to give so great a distinction to this plant; the charm is in the colour and the way in which nature has disposed it, abundantly, in single, separate blossoms, among leaves of a green that is rich and beautiful, and looks almost dusky by contrast with the shining luminous yellow it sets off so well.

On September 17 it was Harvest Festival Sunday at the little church at Itchen Abbas, where I worshipped that day, and I noticed that the decorators had dressed up the font with water plants and flowers from the river; reeds and reed-mace, or cat's tail, and the yellow *mimulus*. It was a mistake. Deep green, glossy foliage, and white and brilliantly coloured flowers look well in churches; white *chrysanthemums*, *arums*, *azaleas* and other conspicuous white flowers; and scarlet *geraniums* and many other garden blooms, which seen in masses in the sunshine hurt the sense—*cinerarias*, *calceolarias*, *lobelias*, *larkspurs*, &c. The darkness of the interior softens the intensity and sometimes crudity of the strongest colours and makes them suitable for decoration. The effect is like that of stained-glass windows, or of a bright embroidery on a sober ground. The graceful grey flowery reeds, and the light green reed-mace with its brown velvet head, and moist yellow of the *mimulus*, which quickly loses its freshness, look not well in the dim religious light of the village church. These should be seen where the sunlight and wind and water are, or not seen at all.

Beautiful as the *mimulus* is when viewed in its natural surroundings, by running waters amidst the greys and light and dark greens of reed and willow, and of sedge and aquatic grasses and feathery cress, and darkest bulrushes, its attractiveness was to me greatly increased by association. To say that a flower new to one can have any associations for him may sound very strange, but it is a fact in this case. Viewing it at a distance of, say, forty or fifty yards, as a flower of a certain size, which might be any shape, in colour a very pure luminous yellow, blooming in profusion all over the rich green rounded masses of the plants, as one may see it in September at Ovington, and at many other points on the Itchen from its

source to Southampton Water, I am so strongly reminded of the yellow camalote of the South American watercourses, that the memory is almost an illusion. It has the pure beautiful yellow of the river camalote; in its size it is like that flower; it grows, too, in the same way, singly among rounded masses of leaves of the same lovely rich green; and the camalote, too, has for neighbours the green blades of the sedges, and grey graceful reeds, and multitudinous bulrushes, their dark polished stems tufted with brown.

Looking at the masses of blossoming *mimulus* at Ovington, I am instantly transported in thought to some waterside thousands of miles away. The dank fresh smell is in my nostrils; I listen delightedly to the low silvery waterlike gurgling note of the little kinglet in his brilliant feathers among the rushes, and to the tremulous song of the marsh grasshoppers; and with a still greater delight do I gaze at the lovely yellow flower, the unforgotten camalote, which is as much to me as the modest crimson-tippet daisy was to Robert Burns, or to Chaucer (if Professor Skeat will allow us to believe that Chaucer ever wrote a word about the daisy); and as the primrose, and violet, and dog-rose, and shining yellow gorse, and the flower o' the broom, and bramble and hawthorn, and purple heather, have for so many inhabitants of these islands who were born and bred amid rural scenes.

On referring to the books for information as to the history of the *mimulus*, as a British wild flower, I found that it was not mentioned, or mentioned only to be dismissed with the remark that it is an "introduced plant." But when was it introduced, and what is its range? And whom are we to ask? On inquiring among one's own friends one learns that it is found, more or less abundantly, in streams pretty well all over the country, or at all events all over the southern half of England, and as far north as Derbyshire; and some say in Scotland, even to the Orkneys; also that it must have been introduced a very long time back, since middle-aged and elderly persons remember it as a common wild flower in their early years. But this is not definite, and not satisfactory, since the memory is not always to be trusted. Some one may know all the whole history of

the plant in this country ; and there may exist some literature about it, if one but knew where to look for it ; but we are certainly justified in feeling annoyed at the silence of the makers of books on British wild flowers and the compilers of local lists and Floras. And what, we should like to ask of our masters, *is* a British wild flower ? Does not the same rule apply to plants as to animals—namely, that when a species, whether "introduced" or imported by chance or by human agency, has thoroughly established itself on our soil, and proved itself able to maintain its existence in a state of nature, it becomes and *is* a British species ? If this rule had not been followed by naturalists, even our beloved little rabbit would not be a native, to say nothing of our rat and blackbeetle, which we could have done without ; and the pheasant and red-legged partridge and capercailzie, and the fallow-deer, and a frog, and a snail, and goodness knows how many other British species, introduced into this country by civilised man, some in recent times. And, going farther back in time, it may be said that every species has at some time been brought from elsewhere—every animal from the red deer and the white cattle to the smallest, most elusive microbe not yet discovered ; and every plant, from the microscopical fungus to the British oak and the yew. The main thing is to have a rule in such a matter ; a simple sensible rule like that of the naturalist, or some other ; and what we should like to know from the botanists is—Have they got a rule, and, if so, what it is ? Many persons besides myself would be glad of an answer to this question : judging from the sale of books on British wild flowers during the last few years, there must be several millions of persons who take an interest in the subject.

One bright September day, when the *mimulus* was in its greatest perfection and my new pleasure in the flower at its highest, I by chance remembered that Gilbert White, the naturalist, was, in the early part of his career, curate for a time at Swarraton, a small village on the Itchen, near its source, about four miles from Alresford. That was in 1747. To Swarraton I went only to find what any guide-book or any person would have told me, that the church no longer existed.

Only the old churchyard remained, overgrown with nettles, the few tombstones that had not been carried away so covered with ivy as to appear like green mounds. A group of a dozen yew-trees marked the spot where the church had stood; and there were besides some very old trees, an ancient yew and a giant beech, &c., and just outside the ground, as noble an ash-tree as I have ever seen. These three, at any rate, must have been big trees a century and a half ago, and well known to Gilbert White. On inquiry I was told that the church had been pulled down a very long time back—about forty years ago, perhaps; that it was a very old and very pretty church, covered with ivy, and that no one knew why it was pulled down. The probable reason was that a vast church was being or about to be built at the neighbouring village of Northington, big enough to hold all the inhabitants of the two parishes together and about a thousand persons besides. This immense church would look well enough among the gigantic structures of all shapes and materials in the architectural wonderland of South Kensington. But I came not to see this building: the little ancient village church, in which the villagers had worshipped for several centuries, where Gilbert White did duty for a year or so, was what I wanted, and I was bitterly disappointed. Looking away from the weed-grown churchyard, I began to wonder what his feelings would be could he revisit this old familiar spot. The group of yew-trees where the church had stood and the desolate aspect of the ground about it would disturb and puzzle his mind; but, on looking round, all the scene would appear as he had known it so long ago—the round wooded hills, the green valley, the stream, and possibly some of the old trees and even the old cottages. Then his eyes would begin to detect things new and strange. First, my bicycle, leaning against the trunk of the old ash-tree, would arrest his attention; but in a few moments, before he could examine it closely and consider for what purpose it was intended, something far more interesting and more wonderful to him would appear in sight. Five large birds standing quietly on the green turf beside the stream—birds never hitherto seen. Regarding them attentively, he would see that they were geese, and it would appear to him that they were of two species, one

white and grey in colour with black legs, the other a rich maroon red with yellow legs; also that they were both beautiful and more graceful in their carriage than any bird of their family known to him. Before he would cease wondering at the presence at Swarraton of these Magellanic geese, no longer strange to any living person's eyes in England, lo! a fresh wonder—beautiful yellow flowers by the stream, unlike any flower that grew there in his day, or by any stream in Hampshire!

"But how long after White's time did that flower run wild in Hampshire?" I asked, and then thought that I might get the answer from some old person who had spent a long life at that spot.

I went no farther than the nearest cottage to find the very one I wanted, an ancient dame of seventy-four, who had never lived anywhere but in that small thatched cottage at the side of the old churchyard. She was an excessively thin old dame, and had the appearance of a walking skeleton in a worn old cotton gown; and her head was like a skull with a thin grey skin drawn tightly over the sharp bones of the face, with pale-coloured living eyes in the sockets. Her scanty grey hair was gathered in a net worn tightly on her head like a skull-cap. The old women in the villages here still keep to this long-vanished fashion.

I asked this old woman to tell me about the yellow flowers by the water, and she said that they had always been there. I told her she must be mistaken; and after considering for awhile she assured me that they grew there in abundance when she was quite young. She distinctly remembered that before her marriage—and that was fifty years ago—she often went down to the stream to gather flowers, and would come in with great handfuls of wild musk.

When she had told me this, even before she had finished speaking, I seemed to see two persons before me—the lean old woman with her thin colourless visage, and, coming in from the sunshine, a young woman with rosy face, glossy brown hair and laughing blue eyes, her hands full of brightest yellow wild musk from the stream. And the visionary woman seemed

to be alive and real, and the other a mere something of the mind, unsubstantial, a ghost of a woman.

But was the old woman right—was this flower which our botanists refuse to admit into their works, written for our instruction, on British wild flowers—was this *mimulus* a common wild flower on the Itchen half a century ago?

W. H. HUDSON.

SONNET

DEAR heart, how pleasant in the latter days,
 When Time hath stol'n the forelock, 'tis to find
 A relic of the past to bring to mind
 The story of some earlier blame or praise!
 Some theme, perhaps, that sets one in a craze
 Of laughter, or some foolscap neatly lined,
 Containing odes to Jessie or the wind,
 Or diaries old that tell of wilful ways!
 Ah! let the great look upward and forget
 The difficult steps up which they climb'd to fame,
 And let the rich think only of their ease,
 There still are some philosophers who please
 To recollect their laughter or their shame:
 And such are wise and shall be wiser yet.

E. H. THOROLD.

THE CREEL-BREAKER

AN ORCADIAN SKETCH

I

"A land that is lonelier than ruin,
A sea that is stranger than death."

"**S**HALL I read to you, Philip?"

"Not just now, thank you, mother, till Hugh has gone out. Why has he to go again to-night, I wonder?"

"My dear boy, did he not tell you that he is going to that terrible island to-night again? It is really most foolish of Hugh to risk his life in small boats at this season."

The woman's voice was querulous, and she spoke as if some personal injury were being done to her.

The fragile boy on the sofa sat up, his eyes shining, and his breath coming fast.

"I think it is splendid of Hugh to risk his life as he does for those people," he cried. "He told me this morning how ill the poor woman on the island was; but I thought I should have him at home this evening," he added with a sigh, turning his white face from his mother.

"Does the light hurt your eyes, dear?" she asked, arranging the lamp-shade as she spoke. "Now it is off your face, turn round and talk to me, Philip; I am so dull to-day."

"Please wait till Hugh goes out, mother." The voice from among the cushions was husky, and the tactless little mother ought to have known that tears were not far off.

"Really, Philip," she said fretfully, "Hugh seems to be more to you now than your own mother! I sometimes wish that we had stayed where we were, where I could have you to myself, and I am sure if Hugh expects that either you or I can get stronger in this climate——"

She stopped abruptly, as a tall young man clad in oilskins came quietly into the room.

"Well, old boy, I'm off again," he said, as he seated himself on the sofa and looked kindly into the boy's face. "I am sorry to leave you to-night, Phil, I have hardly seen you to-day, but we shall have more time to-morrow, I hope."

"It will be pretty rough crossing to-night, Hugh, won't it?" said Philip. One little hand was trying to fasten the big buttons of the oilskin coat, while the other was held fast in his brother's.

"Crossing!" A shade of annoyance passed over Hugh's face as he turned to his step-mother.

"You told him I was going to the island," he said quickly.

"Oh! I am very sorry, I did not think you would mind; it seems to me that I am constantly putting my foot into it nowadays."

"Nonsense, Elise," said the young man, "it does not matter at all. Philip has more sense than to worry about boats, have you not, Phil? Wait till next summer when I have taught you to steer and manage the sheets a bit! But I must be off, I hear Molly at the door; poor beast, it is her fourth drive to-day." He stooped to kiss the little wistful face, and rose to go.

"You look tired to-day, Elise," he said kindly, taking his step-mother's hand. "Don't sit up for me, I shall probably be late. Good-night." And with a last smile to the boy, he left the room.

Philip listened to the quick, light step on the stair, the cheerful voice at the door, and then the crunch of gravel and the pony's step as the trap rattled along the road.

"Now, mother dear, will you read to me?" he said gently, turning his face among the cushions again.

It was only half-past four o'clock on the grey February afternoon when the doctor set out to drive along a rough hill road; but the darkness was only holding off reluctantly till its appointed hour, and was already spreading its wings over the fading landscape.

The tired pony stumbled once or twice, and Hugh wondered compassionately how it did not do so more often. Sweeping over the moor in great white sheets came the rain, flying before the salt north wind; at a sharp turn of the road both man and

horse were almost blinded by its fury. The low treeless hills, that could glow with the richest colouring when the sun lit up their red grasses and withered heather, were one monotonous brown, with here and there a drift of snow lying under a bank or filling up a peat-cutting. Earth and sky were blurred and bleak, and the air was piercingly cold.

The road wound up hill for two or three miles. Hugh let the reins lie on the pony's back, and gave himself up to his thoughts.

When he left the island that morning he knew that there was no hope of his patient's recovery, but the look on old Adam Corrigan's face when he heard that his wife was really dying made Hugh add hastily that he would "take a run over" before night. Needless as he knew the journey to be from a medical point of view, it never occurred to him that it might be postponed till the morning.

But it was Philip's face that was before his eyes this dreary afternoon as he jogged along through the rain: it had looked so small and white of late. His step-mother's unfinished sentence kept ringing in his ears, "If Hugh expects that either you or I can get better in this climate—" Was it really the cold, cruel weather that was making the boy look worse? He put the question uncompromisingly to himself, and found the answer that forced itself upon him very bitter. Philip had rallied so wonderfully in summer, when Hugh brought him and his mother north, that they had determined to try if a whole year in these sea-girt islands would complete the cure. Hugh dared not think what life would be in this lonely land without the boy's eager welcome after the hard day's work; for if the hero-worship of the child was intense, the love of the hero towards the little worshipper was no less so.

The pony set off at a quick trot, and Hugh awoke from his reverie to find that they had reached the top of the long hill, and were already on the downward slope.

"By Jove! this is more than I bargained for," he muttered, as he drew his sou'-wester closer over his brow, and tried, under the shelter of its brim, to look at the scene before him.

Earth, sea, and sky were enveloped in a haze of spray. Between the gusts of salt wind that blinded him at intervals,

Hugh could just make out that the sea was running high ; great white breakers rolled along the low shore at the foot of the hill, and as he drove on, the cliffs of the island across the tide-way loomed black through the flying spin-drift.

"I doubt whether I'll get across to-night," he thought, "but it will be something of an experience if I do."

Half-way down the hill the cart ruts became less precipitous, the road widened out, and ran smoothly between small farms and crofts. There was an air of comfort about the well-filled stack-yards ; and the light of a smithy fire shone cheerily at the roadside.

As Hugh drove up, the smith—a brawny giant with a grizzled beard and great black eyes—ran out to the pony's head.

"Breezy th' night, Doctor," he cried.

"More than breezy, I doubt, Geordie," said Hugh, laughing.

"Hid's no' the Isle ye're thinkin' o' th' night, sir, surely ?"

"Yes, I am thinking of the Isle, and I intend to cross too, if I can get any one to take me."

"Weel, weel ! I daarsay I'm crossed mesel' when hid was no muckle better, an' if ye canna' get Jock o' Skaill or Willie o' Linda, just put word to me an' I'll tak' ye mesel'."

"Are you a boatman too, Geordie ?"

"Deed am I. They'll no' be feared to trust me wi' their boat—if ye're no feared to come wi' me."

"Not I, Geordie ; as long as I get there and back I don't care how I get ; but I'd rather have your company than any other."

"Oh aye, maybe, maybe. Weel, I'll tak' the sholt, puir beast, she'll be the better o' a bite an' a rest, an' gang ye aff while ye hae light, hid'll no' be lang ; th' wind's risin' ; aye, I'll warran' he'll be a creel-breaker afore th' morn'."

"Are the creels out already, Geordie ? That's early for the lobsters."

"Hid was that spell o' fine weather we had i' the first o' the month 'at tempted us to put them oot, but we'll suffer for hid th' night, I'm thinkin'. There's Willie o' Linda ga'in for the shore, ye'll catch him or he wins there if ye rin ; but I'm ready to gang if he'll no tak' ye—mind that."

"All right, thank you, Geordie," and the doctor set off running

over the wet fields with long swinging strides that soon brought him up to Willie o' Linda.

Geordie looked after him with admiration.

"Thu're a fine lad, an' no mistak'," he said. "I'd been blide o' a crack wi' thee, but hid wad no' dae t' ha'd thee hawering here wi' siccan a sky."

Willie agreed, after some hesitation, to take the doctor to the Isle, and the two men hurried down to the shore, which at this point was low; long, shelving rocks running out below green banks.

The noust where the boats were hauled above high-water mark was sheltered from the north wind by an ancient Pict's house—a large grassy mound, through which the old building showed here and there where the wind and waves had worn away the turf.

A group of men and boys crouched among the boats, their heads just appearing over a ridge of turf, watching the incoming tide as it swept past through the narrow Sound. Regardless of the rain and spray driving over them, they lay there waiting and watching for what the sea might bring them from her limitless stores. Sometimes it was a valuable log of teak that a gale like this brought to their feet; sometimes only broken wreckage—always useful in their treeless land, or broken bamboos, of which the boys made fishing rods; but above all else the sea-ware that was left by such a tide was invaluable to the makers of kelp.

These were the ostensible reasons which brought the scattered groups of men to the shore on such a day; but the glamour and mystery of the sea is never more irresistible than when the tide rushes in from the ocean, as it did on this bleak February evening, with an unconquerable strength, and a power which seems magnetic in its influence, and which fascinates the watcher till all outward feeling of cold and discomfort are forgotten.

When the doctor appeared some of the men rose and came forward to meet him.

"Coorse night, Doctor. Ye'll no' be for th' Isle th' night, sir?" said an old man with a weather-beaten face.

"Yes, John, Willie and I are just starting ; not a good-night to cross, I suppose. The tide will turn soon, won't it ?"

"Oh aye, but if ye're back or the ebb begins ye'll do fine ; but the Soond'll no' be bonny water to cross i' this airt o' wind."

"Well, we'll have to try to get back before the tide turns," said Hugh cheerfully.

"Plaze, sir, what way's th' ould woman doin' ? I thought Aadam was gey an deesmal lik' when he put ye ower i th' mornin'."

"Poor old Betty is pretty far gone, John ; but I see Willie is ready, so good-night to you."

The old man followed Hugh down over the rocks, and lent a hand in shoving off the boat.

"Haste thee back, Willie," he called after them as the boat heeled over before the wind and slipped out between the long points of rock which formed the entrance to the noust, "dinna' let the ebb catch thee, boy," he added half to himself as he turned to his companions.

"That's the best doctor ever I see'd, boys ; see'st thu the way he can steer as well as wan o' wirsels ?"

"Weel, Chohn, I ken no' whatena kind o' doctor he is, but hid's true he's no that bad wi' th' boats—for a sooth-country chap."

"Aye, but he's a gude doctor forbye," cried a lanky boy with a cracked voice. "He cured wir peerie * Mary wi' wan bottle whan she was bad wi' the croup ; mither said she nivver seed the like afore."

"Weel, weel, bairns," said old John, "I wis' he was weel ower this night's wark ; hid's no a gude night for a peerie bit o' a boat ; but I'm been oot mesel' in many a waar."

Meantime the little boat struggled bravely across the rough water ; lost to sight for a moment sometimes in the trough of a wave, only to reappear on the crest of the next. Before it reached the island it was indistinguishable among the flying spray and tossing waves, and the men upon the shore turned slowly from their watch.

* Peerie = little.

II

AN hour later the flood tide was near its height, and the water was tossing, angry and restless, waiting till the ebb set in, which would carry it unresisting down the Sound, like a huge river, to the open sea. Then it is, when the strength of the outgoing tide meets the strength of the great ocean rollers in the narrow straits between the islands, that the terrific six hours' conflict begins between the two forces, raising the water into a wild vortex which means danger, if not destruction, to any small craft drawn into its whirlpools, when the seas are running high.

About a dozen men had gathered again at the noust, to help to run up Willie's boat over the rocks when it should return.

"Here she is," cried one "she's comin' on bravely, but hid'll be a nesty job landin' th' night; come doon, boys, they'll hae need o' us a', I'm thinkin'."

The men clattered down over the slippery rocks in their great sea boots, light-hearted as boys, though scarcely owing to themselves how much they had feared for the safety of the boat.

In a few minutes it was within hail.

"Doon wi' th' sail, Willie boy, she'll dae fine noo," shouted John.

The sail came down with a rattle, and a great unbroken wave carried the boat silently alongside the rock; Hugh at the helm and Willie rolling up the dripping canvas. Half a dozen pairs of strong hands caught the boat and held it firm tiil it rose with the next wave, when they hoisted it on to the smooth rock and ran it up towards the noust.

"What way's Betty?" asked John in a low voice when they had stopped to take a breath.

"He thinks she'll be awa' afore th' morn," said Willie, nodding at the doctor, who was carrying up the oars in front.

"Weel, weel!"

"Aye, aye!"

"Puir Aadam!"

"Betty was aye a kind wife."

"Deed was she."

"Is Cheanie hame?"

"Na, she's i' th' toon."

"Oh aye, in a place, puir bairn."

"Na, she's learnin' the dressmakin'."

"Tut, tut, is hid for th' white-maas * i' th' Isle she's ga'in' to mak' braas?"

"Na, Chohn, they a' learn hid noo, what for shouldna' Cheanie?"

"Wha's the wife rinnin' to the doctor, boys?"

"Gude! hid's surely no' Cheanie hersel'!"

"I wadna' won'er."

The men left the boat and hurried up to join the group at the noust.

A young girl stood among the men, sobbing piteously, and wringing her hands.

"Oh! but I maan get ower th' night," she cried in a shrill voice, "'deed I maan. Is me fether no' here? If he kent I was here he'd come ower for me, I ken fine he wad. They telt me 'at me mither was deein', an' I'm traivelled a' the road frae the toon, an' noo ye'll no' let me gang till her! Oh! mither, mither," she cried, stretching out her arms to the sea, "I s'all win to thee. If I could but sweem I'd no' be lang o' comin'. Willie boy, thu'll tak' me, thu'll no' ha'd me frae me mither, an' her deein' th' night!"

The men stood round her helpless and speechless: at last John laid his hand kindly on her shoulder.

"Bairn, bairn, thu disna' ken what thu're askin'," he said gently, "Willie has his ain bairns to think o', an' ye ken weel enough this is no' a night to cross wi' siccan a wind. Na, bird, dinna' greet, puir lamb, indeed! me hert's sair for thee: but thu'll be a gude bairn an' we'll put thee ower wi' th' first o' light, an' thu'll see thee mither yet, buddo. Come awa' up wi' me, an' Mary'll gie thee dry claes, an' a cup o' tea, puir t'ing, indeed!"

The girl sank on the stones at his feet.

"Oh, Chohn, I'm no' wantin' dry claes, I'm no' wantin' tea,

* White-maas = seagulls.

I'm no' wantin' to gang wi' thee: I'm wantin' to get hame. Mither, mither," she wailed, "tho'll no' gang awa' till thu' sees thee ain peerie Cheanack—Mither! Mither!"

Hugh was pacing restlessly up and down; a fierce struggle going on in his heart. On one side this poor child crying for the mother whom he knew well she would not find alive at "the first o' light." On the other Philip's little face—the dark eyes turned wistfully towards the door, watching for his return through the long sleepless night. But the last piteous wail of the girl decided him.

"Look here, men," he said, stepping forward, "I am willing to take her across, if any one of you will come with me."

"I'm your man, sir," said a new voice at his side, and the burly figure of the smith pushed into the middle of the group.

"What's this, Cheanack? Siccan a cryin' oot on the shore! Get to thee feet, lass," and he took the girl's hand in a kindly grasp that belied his rough voice. "Aye, Doctor, hid's a grim sea to look i' the face o', but if ye gang I'll gang, an' we'd best be off. Haste ye, boys, doon wi' the boat again. Come awa, Cheanie buddo."

The men turned with alacrity to run down the boat once more; glad of the tone of authority in which the smith gave his orders—taking all responsibility off their shoulders.

In a few minutes all was ready, Hugh at the helm, Geordie hoisting the sail, and poor Jeanie crouching in the bottom of the boat, straining her eyes over the sea in the direction of her island home.

"Gude luck to ye," cried John, as the well-reefed sail flapped noisily for a moment, and then filled with a sudden crack which laid the boat half over on its side. "Aye, an' it'll be gude guidance that'll bring ye safe to lan' i' this gale," he muttered, as he watched it scudding through the seething foam until it was lost to sight in the darkness.

The men went slowly and quietly up to the noust.

"Hid'll be a sair night's wark 'at Cheanie's warked if they dinna' win ower," said one.

"Hid'll be that, indeed. That doctor's a fine man," said another.

"He is that, an' puir Geordie as weel. Boys, hid made me kind o' shamed lik' when ould Geordie gied aff sae herty."

"Geordie has nane but himsel' to think o', nether wife nor bairns, puir buddy."

"What mak' ye o' Tam?"

"Oh! there's Tam, indeed, I fairly forgot Tam; but he has his ain wife an' bairns; he thinks mair o' them than o' his fether noo; an' Geordie kens it; for a' his herty ways, he's gey an' lonesome sometimes; but Tam nivver marks 'at!"

"Na, he nivver thinks on!"

"Tam nivver thought muckle o' any wan but himsel', he was aye for himsel'!"

"Tam wears six sarks on his back," chimed in a boy's voice.

There was a deep laugh from the men.

"I wadna' won'er," said John, "he was aye terrible found o' his comfort."

"Weel, hid's the truth," cried the boy, "peerie Tam telt me, an' he said his fether——"

"Ha'd thee tongue, boy, here's the man himsel'," said John as a short square-figured man appeared on the bank above, and slowly lowered himself down among the men.

He stood stolidly looking at the boats, then turned and looked at the water, and back to the men.

"Wha's oot?" he said at last.

"Hid's thee fether, boy," said John gently, after a moment's pause.

"Whar'-piece is he gane?"

"To the Isle wi' the doctor and peerie Cheanie Corrigan. Betty's deecin' th' night."

"Mercy me!" said Tam, as he seated himself on a creel and took out his pipe.

"The win' ease gey an' sudden th' day," he drawled, when he had his pipe between his teeth, "I was mostlins, halflins thinkin' to gang oot for the creels mesel' on the top o' th' day; but when I cam' to the end o' the hoose hid was castin' drops, so I gied back."

"Thu'd dae that indeed, Tam, I dinna' doobt," said John with

a wink, the significance of which was lost in the darkness. "Hid minds me," he went on, "o' the gale 'at drave ould Mansie o' Trinigar's peats into the sea—none o' you'll mind that—they cam' ashore at the tither side o' the bay, and Nansie just bigged them whar' they landed. 'Deed,' he said, 'if Providence t'inks me peats s'u'd stan' at the sooth side o' the bay, I'll no' be the man to hin'er him,' so he certed them roond the bay as he had need o' them, load by load."

"Aye, I'm heard tell o' that," said the boy, laughing.

"They'd be gey an' weet," said Tam, as he rose. "Weel, I'm ga'in' hame. Its no' muckle gude we're doin' the boat sittin' here like a sight o' "Tammie-Nories".* And slowly climbing up the bank, he disappeared.

"Weel, weel, if that's no' an unnatural crittur o' a son!" said John with a sigh. "In a' me days I nivver seed the like. Boys," he added, "the sky's no' bonny; I doubt we'll hae a creel-breaker th' night."

III

IN his little house on the island, Adam Corrigan sat by his dying wife, holding her hand as he read to her out of the ponderous family Bible. When he reached the end of his chapter he took off his spectacles, and looked at the still face on the pillow.

"That's fine, Aadam," whispered the woman, "thu're a bonny reader, boy. Are thu been at the kye?" she asked suddenly.

"Na, na, Betty, hid's no' the kye I'm thinkin' o' th' night."

"Weel, rin, boy, haste thee, the puir bastes'll be stervin'."

"Not they, buddo; Jock o' Gorn was doon a peerie while back, an' he gied them their neips as he gaed by."

"Will the doctor be safe ower yet, Aadam?"

"Oh! aye will he."

"Hid's a bad night to be upon the sea; luik oot, boy, an' tell me what thu seest."

"What s'u'd I see, lass?"

"I dinna ken, Aady, but I'd be blide if thu'd tak' a luik."

* Tammie-Nories = puffins.

Adam went out into the night, carefully closing the door. In a few minutes he returned quickly.

"Lass," he said breathlessly, "I'll hae to lave thee a meenit, there's a light on the sea, an' hid's boond to be a boat; I'll hae to rin doon till her."

"Cry on the Gorn folk, boy; dinna gang thu're lane, Aady."

"If I hae the time, buddo, but whar's the lantern? I doobt I'm left her i' the byre; I'll no' be lang." And the old man hurried out, leaving his wife alone.

"Aadam, Aadam," she sighed, "me puir man! What will come o' thee when I'm no' here? An' me peerie Cheanie, me bit o' bairn, me youngest, what way can I gang an' lave her lane?"

By the time Adam had found his lantern and reached the shore, the boat was close at hand, and Geordie's "Hullo!" sounded clear through the gale.

"That's Geordie the smith, I'll warran'," said Adam. "Kape her a bit to the wind yet, Geordie," he shouted, "noo, cast me the rop', boy, there shu comes, ha'd on, easy there, boys, easy," as the boat swung round into the shelter of the rock on which he stood.

"Fether! Fether!" a shrill childish voice called out from the bottom of the boat.

"Gude be here, boys! What hae ye there?" cried Adam, starting back. "Cheanie, bird, is that thee?"

Geordie lifted the girl easily from where she sat, and handed her across to her father.

"The puir lass," said Adam, as he carried her over the rocks. "Whaten a night! an' whaten a hame-comin'! But it's thee mither 'at'll be blide to see thee face this night."

"Oh! fether, is she livin'?"

"Aye aye, she's livin' an' no that wake ether; haste thee up till her, buddo."

The girl, needing no second bidding, vanished quickly into the darkness.

"Weel, Geordie, what kind o' trick is this to play on siccan a night?" said Adam, turning to the boat. His voice was

husky, and the hand he laid on Geordie's shoulder was shaking. "Wha's wi' ye, boy?"

"Hid's the doctor, man; hid's no me doin'—this trick as ye ca' it—he was that grieved for peerie Cheanack that he wad hae her ta'en ower whativver s'u'd happen."

"Weel, Doctor, I'll nivver be out o' your debt for this; but come up, come up to the hoose; ye'll no' venture back th' night."

"Well, Geordie, what do you say?" asked Hugh. "Do you think we can cross to-night again?"

"Weel, sir, I'm at your service; it's no' a chosen night for the Soond, but I daarsay we wad get ower safe enough, if ye're fain to get hame th' night; the wind's wi' us, if we hae no' the tide."

"I think we'll try it, then," said Hugh, after a pause—Philip's eyes had won the day in this decision. "Well, Adam, we won't delay, for the gale is not getting any quieter, I fear. Better go up and get Jeanie warmed and fed; she has had a rough day of it, poor child. Good night."

"Gude night, an' a gude crossin' to ye, sir; an' may the Lord bless you for this night's wark; I can say no more"

The old man was standing on the rock, his cap in his hand, and the light of the lantern shedding a halo round his ruddy face and white hair—a tall, strong figure that might have stood for a picture of one of his Viking ancestors. A gust of wind shook the lantern in his hand; the light was out, the picture gone, and the stern realities of the storm had to be faced.

There was no moon, but the northern sky, behind the masses of flying cloud, was white with Aurora, shedding a cold, unearthly light on the water, and making it possible to steer clear of the rocks at the entrance of the little bay.

"Are you taking in another reef, Geordie?"

"Aye, am I, an' I'll maybe tak' in another yet afore we're out o' the shelter o' the Isle."

The boat lurched heavily among the broken water; with so small a rag of sail it was no easy matter to keep it going straight, but when they cleared the last point of the bay the wind caught it with a sudden shriek, and sent it flying sometimes over, but as often through, the crests of the waves.

"Bale, Geordie, bale for your life, man!" cried Hugh, as a heavy sea crashed over the bow.

"Time enough, sir, time enough; I'll no' mak' fast the sheet for ony water i' the boat; I'm seen plenty o' that. What wan hand can do she will do, an' ye might spare a hand yersel'—na, na; dinna try, ye need a' yer wits for yer ain wark—but ye're a grand hand at the steerin'."

All the time he was speaking Geordie was baling hard with his left hand while he held the sheet firm in his right.

They were in the tide now, and it seemed to Hugh a pretty equal contest between the water and the wind as to which way they would be carried. His eyes were fixed on the huge rolling masses as they towered toward the boat, one after another. He knew that if one of those caught the boat on the broadside it must be the end of everything. It seemed to him that they were making no headway, and that those great black waves would continue to roll till hand and eye could bear the strain no longer, and one, only a little stronger than the rest, would sweep over their frail craft.

Through it all Philip's face looked at Hugh through the darkness. If every nerve was strained, it was for Philip's sake; those trustful eyes must not look in vain for his returning.

"Are we getting on at all, Geordie?" he asked at last.

"Aye are we; hid's slow work, but wance we win through the tide we'll do fine."

"Are we half through yet?" Hugh was ashamed of the childishness of the question, but the old man's voice was so reassuring with its cheery answers that he felt impelled to talk.

"Aboot that, I daarsay—look oot, man!" shouted Geordie, as the boat once more rose to the crest of a monster wave, and with a straining shudder plunged into the trough of the next. "Here's anither, there's boond to be twa-tree o' them—ha'd on as ye're ga'in' an' we'll win through yet."

Old John and one or two other men waited in the shelter of the noust till they made sure that the boat would not return that night.

"Aadam wad nivver let them cross th' night," said Willie o' Linda.

"Na, not he, Chohn," said another, "an' what for s'u'd they cross? There was naethin' I ken o' to tak' them hame th' night."

"May be so," said John, "but the doctor has aye plenty to dae to tak' him hame; an' I'm thinkin' he'd be wild for crossin'."

"We'll give them anither half-hoor," said Willie, looking at his watch, "an' if they're comin' ova, Chohn, they'll be afore that: they hae the wind wi' them, an' when the win by the tide, they maan come fast."

"Hid is strange," said John, "'at we're no' seein' the light; it held fine as they gaed ower, but it might be easy slocked i' siccan a sea."

After a long silence Willie looked at his watch again.

"Come on, boys," he said, "time's up. Geordie an' the doctor'll be warm i' their beds i' the Isle lang syne."

The men rose reluctantly, and followed him up the wet bank.

"I'm loth to gang, but I daarsay I'm but an ould fule," said John, as he took a last look over the seething water: and in the little house over the hills Philip lay with wide eyes turned toward the door, watching for the strong kind face that would never smile on him again.

BARBARA ROBERTSON.

THE VALUE OF A PENNY IN 1695

THE period following the Restoration of Charles II. was, as is well known, a time of almost unparalleled luxury and extravagance, which, indeed, was one of the most remarkable features of the reaction against the grim Puritanism which had so long held the land in thrall.

To such lengths, indeed, did this prodigality go, that many worthy people conceived it to be their duty to protest publicly against it, and their protests took the form of a series of tracts in which they deplore the frightful extravagance that they see around them, and endeavour to instil into the minds of their less level-headed countrymen some idea of the value of the money which they were so recklessly squandering. One of these pamphlets, entitled "The Worth of a Penny; or, a Caution to keep Money; with the Causes of the Scarcity and Misery of the Want thereof in these hard and mercilesse Times," published in 1695 by one Henry Peacham, is especially interesting from the light which it sheds upon contemporary manners and customs, and more particularly on the purchasing power of money in those days.

The English, in the writer's opinion, are "the most profuse and careless in the way of expense" of all the nations in Europe. The City of London, he tells us, "eats more good beef and mutton in one month than all Spain, Italy, and a part of France in a whole year;" and he proceeds to cite, as an instance of the gastronomical powers of his countrymen, the case of one Wood of Kent, who "eat up at one dinner fourteen green geese, equal to the old ones in bigness, with sauce of gooseberries." Moreover, whereas in Venice "a magnifico thought it no disgrace to his magnificenza to go into the market to choose and buy his own meat what he best liketh," an Englishman of noble family "scorned to do either," and preferred to put up with inferior joints and extortionate prices. Indeed, it was even considered derogatory for a gentleman, when he entered a tavern and

ordered a dinner, to inquire the price of the meal until he had eaten it, when as often as not he would be confronted with a bill "as long as a broker's inventory," which he must needs pay without demur, or else "stand to the courtesie of a nimble tong'd drawer or his many ring'd mistress," an alternative naturally most distasteful to an "ingenuous and free spirit." And the writer then goes on to relate with much indignation how "my lord of Northampton's gentleman," when dining at Greenwich, was actually charged "eight shillings for an ordinary capon," which custom had, of course, prohibited him inquiring the price of beforehand, and other unfortunate people of his acquaintance "seven or nine shillings for a pair of soals"—charges, he adds, which "would make a Florentine run out of his wits." While on the subject of gastronomy, it is somewhat startling to find that mushrooms, nowadays esteemed a delicacy, are stigmatised by the writer as "vile and loathsome things," and numbered with "snails, frogs, mice, young kitlings and the like," as food fit only for people of a "miserable and base humour."

But it was not only in their living that the English appear to have been prodigal in those days, but in their dress as well. The writer deplores the fact that, instead of following the good example set them by the Dutch and Spaniards, "who for these two or three hundred years have kept themselves to one fashion," his countrymen have become the "apes of Europe," and, "like Proteus, must change their shape every year, nay, quarter, moneth, and week, as well in their doublets, hose, cloaks, bands, boots, and what not." He then indulges in a long tirade against the prevailing fashions, both on account of their costliness, which causes men to pay "forty or fifty pounds for bands," and "five and eight pounds the dozen for gold and silver points to dangle usually at the knee," and also because of their absurdity, which compels a luckless gallant, even in the depth of winter, to wear clothes "cut to the skin" and a hat "which hardly covers his crown, but stands upon his periwig like an extinguisher;" and fashionable ladies and their waiting women to "stand and shiver in the hardest frosts rather than suffer their bare necks and breasts to passe our eyes unviewed."

He lays the blame of these extravagant and constantly changing fashions upon the French, and pertinently inquires why the French should not imitate us as well as we them—a question which many a long-suffering husband and father in Mayfair and Belgravia is asking at the present day.

He then proceeds to demonstrate how criminal all this extravagance is, and how easy it should be for people to keep their expenditure within reasonable limits, in proof of which he enumerates some of the many good and useful things to be bought for a penny, which coin, he informs us, is derived from a Greek word meaning "poverty," "because for the most part poor people are herewith relieved"—a truly ingenious explanation.

When the good citizen of London town rose in the morning he might hie him to the nearest baker's shop, and, on payment of a penny, "search among the rolls" till he found one to his liking; and then proceed to a coffee-house, where for another penny he could have "a dish of coffee to quicken his stomach and refresh his spirits." While breakfasting he could send out for one of the "weekly news-books," sold at the same price, and "read all about murders, floods, witches, fires, tempests, and what not." After breakfast he might, by paying another penny, "take a walk within one of the fairest gardens in the city, and have a nosegay or two made of what sweet flowers he pleased, to satisfy the sense of smell;" or mount to the top of St. Paul's, and have the pleasure of knowing that "he was above the best in the city, yea, the Lord Mayor himself." From St. Paul's he might take a walk through Cheapside Market, and "have his penny tripled in the same kind by purchasing penny-grass, penny-wort, and penny-royal." Should he feel hungry after his walk, he could enter a tavern, and for a penny buy a "fair cucumber," and for another a "pudding broil'd;" while, of course, plenty of malt liquor could be had for the same sum; or if, as with Lord Chancellor Bacon, "small beere liked not his stomach," he could wash his meal down with a pennyworth of *aqua vite*. If, being in a generous mood, he should reward the wench who waited on him with another of these useful coins, he would have the satisfaction of

knowing that his gratuity would enable her to buy "as much red oaker as would serve seven years for the painting of her cheeks."

After dinner a penny would admit him to see "any monster or jackanapes" that might be on view, or even "those roaring boys the Lyons"; while, if he happened to be of an intellectual turn of mind, for the same sum he might have the privilege of hearing "a most eloquent oration upon our English kings and qucens from him who keeps the monuments at Westminster."

If, fired by the verger's eloquence, he should seek to know whether there was any chance of history repeating itself in the immediate future, "he might tell this (which the devil himself cannot do)" by buying one of the penny almanacks, written by some Mother Shipton or Zadkiel of those days.

If, when the evening came on, he should happen to find himself in convivial company, and in consequence his head become "light," then for "a penny doubl'd" he might easily find one "to guard him to his lodging," where if by any chance the wife of his bosom should take exception to the state in which her lord and master returned home, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he might fare forth again, and, with the outlay of another penny, buy "as much of that tree, which is green all the year round and beareth red berries, as will cure any shrew's tongue if it be too long for her mouth—viz., a holliwand."

H. NOEL WILLIAMS.

BOB BANHAM'S LAST CROSSING

I HEARD the story of Bob Banham's last crossing of the river from old Zack Thrower, on a January night when the marsh dykes were full of flood-water, and Zack was working his wooden-wheeled drainage mill at the mouth of Reedmere Fleet.

In the hope that there might be some fowl about, I had rambled several miles along the river wall, but had only seen a misk of duck which rose from a distant creek side. Soon after mid-day a dense fog drifted down from seaward, hiding river, dykes, and marshes. Even the edge of the sedgy rond became invisible from the river wall, and the nearness of a pollard willow or sallow carr was recognised by the pattering of its mist drops rather than by its phantasmal looming through the fog. So I was glad when I came to Reedmere Fleet to find old Zack crouching over a glowing cinder fire in the lower chamber of the weather-beaten old windmill, and to hear that in spite of the wind having dropped just before the fog appeared he meant to stay in the mill for a while on the "off-chance," as he put it, of the rising of another breeze. The chance he admitted to be a small one; but while the dykes kept filling in consequence of recent heavy rains, he was anxious to work the mill whenever there was wind enough to turn its canvas-covered sails. For an hour or more we made ourselves as comfortable as possible on a couple of old eel-trunks drawn up close to the fire, and Zack, as was his cheerful custom, monopolised the greater part of the conversation.

After a while he began talking about the subsidence of a new marsh road during the recent floods, and this reminded him that before the road was laid down and bordering willows planted there was only a muddy footpath across the marshes between the Yarmouth Road and Reedmere, and where the cart ferry now crosses the river at Reedmere Staithe Bob Banham used to row the Reedmere folk across in an old ballasted

smack-boat. Then he told me that from the time when they were boys together in a little marshland hamlet on the shores of Breydon until Bob made his last crossing they were cronies. Side by side they had cut the reeds and mown the marsh grass; night after night they had worked together the same eel-sett on the Bure; on many a day and night they had crouched together for hours in the reed shoals on the watch for the flighting fowl. And, curiously enough, it was in the same year that they both met with accidents which compelled them to abandon their varied employments and pastimes, and settle down to regular and unexciting occupations. He, himself, became incurably lame from an injury sustained in falling from the second floor of his mill, while Bob Banham lost an arm through the bursting of an old muzzle-loader which, before it came into his possession, his father had carried about the marshes for forty years.

"Well, there worn't nuthin for it but to do what we could an' make the best on it," said Zack, "so I stuck to th' owd mill an' Bob tried to git a job as lock-keeper at Mereham water-mill. But the river commish'ners wouldn't appynt a one-armed man to th' lock, so for some months he didn't know what to du. But arter a while he heerd that owd Steeve Withers, as used to ferry the Reedmere folk acrost th' river, wor dead, an' seein' that his job wor one that there worn't much hangin' tu Bob had little trouble in gittin' it. You see, his havin' only one arm worn't much hindrance to him, for he allus sculled th' boat, an' th' river at Reedmere Staithe ain't more'n thirty yards wide. He built hisself a little shod on th' Reedmere bank, put up a board outside with 'Bob Banham, ferryman,' painted on it, an' there he stayed from six in th' mornin' till ten at night, Sundays and week-days, for nigh on thirty year.

"Th' fust time I went over to Reedmere to see him I felt kinder sorry for him, a-cause I knew he'd allus bin a chap what liked to git about a bit an' shute his duck an' net his mess o' brame (bream) when he liked. But, bless you, when I got to th' Staithe he stepped out o' his little shod lookin' as happy as a king. An' arter we'd passed th' seal o' the day to one another he axed me inside th' shod to look at some liggers he

wor getting ready to lay out near th' ferry, for, as he says, 'I ain't no good at draw-nettin' now ; but I can lay out liggers, an' it'll be a quare thing if, what wi' liggers, eel-lines, an' ferryin', I can't pick up a livin'.'

"An' he worn't far wrong nayther, as I found out when I went to Reedmere some three months arterwards. Ezakly how he did it I don't know ; but by that time there worn't a man in Reedmere, barrin' Turrell th' shopkeeper, who did more business o' one kind an' another than Bob. Mainly, I reckon, it wor a-cause he met more people, strangers an' others, than most folks about there, for every one that come into Reedmere from Yarmouth way had to cross his ferry. So he got to know flight-shooters an' draw-netters, eel-catchers an' wherry-men, dyke-drawers, reed-cutters, an' cattle-tenders ; an' not only sich as them, who he'd bin used to all his life, but somehow he got to know dealers an' bird-stuffers at Yarmouth an' Beccles an' Lowestoft. An' arter that, whenever a man had fish or fowl to sell he got Bob to find him a buyer ; and if a rare bird wor shot on th' marshes he allus knew where th' gunner could get th' best price for it. Reed pheasants (bearded titmice), long-tailed-ducks, bitterns, spoonbills, an' all sorts o' strange birds found their way at some time or another to his shod. An' in th' cruisin' season, when th' holiday folks come down on to th' rivers, what must he do but set up as a shopkeeper an' sell fish-hooks, lines, worams, an' ground-bait. Afore he'd bin at th' ferry twelve months he had a new board painted for th' outside o' his shod, an' on it wor 'Robert Banham. Ferryman an' Fish an' Fowl Agent. Anglers' Outfitter an' Accommodater. Ground-bait an' Worams sold here.'

"So what wi' one thing an' another owd Bob had his hands fairish full. All through th' summer he wor busy from mornin' till night, an' in winter, when th' Reedmere folks, barrin' th' marshmen an' gunners, ony crossed th' marshes when they wor forced to, he'd sit for hours in his little shod a-contrivin' fancy trifles to sell to th' summer holiday-makers. But he allus had an ear for a hail from th' mash side o' th' river, an' no one could ever say he kep' 'em a-waitin' for th' ferry-boat. Curously enough, even arter he'd grown that deaf you had to holla

to him as if he wor a hoss, he could allus hear a hail from acrost th' river, though th' wind might be a-stroomin' through th' reed like a troshin-ingin. Orfen on winter days, when th' east wind wor a-blowin' fit to flay you, an' mashmen's eyelids got that frooze they fared to hear 'em creak, owd Ben 'ud keep a look-out for folks what wor crossin' th' marshes, an' he'd be ready an' waitin' for 'em when they got to th' river. 'Zack, bor,' says he to me one day, 'when you an' I had got all our limbs sound I thowt th' time 'ud never come when I could sittle down to sich a life as this; but, bless ye, bor, lookin' arter folks is a sight more satisfyin' work than lookin' arter fowl, an' now I ha' got to feel at home in it I wouldn't change my little shod for th' best houseboat on th' rivers. But I ain't sorry that afore I lost my right duke I had my time among th' fish an' fowl, for it ha' gin me summut to think about o' nights. When I hear th' fowl go a-whistlin' an' a-screechin' over I call to mind th' nights an' days when you an' I used to tramp th' river walls together an' hide 'mong th' reed; an' when owd Jim Runnacles comes an' tells me as how he'd got nine stone o' eels in his sett it mind me o' the time when I had a sett o' my own on th' North River. Though I can't go arter th' fowl, I can watch 'em a-wheelin' an' flightin' across the marshes, an' since I bowt them fild-glasses, what used to be Mole Abishaw's, I ha' bin able to watch th' reed sparrows an' reed pheasants—an' them's curous little warmin in their nantics as ever you seed. Since a pair o' reed pheasants naasted agin th' carr yonder, an' I spent hours a-watchin' on 'em, I hain't never wanted to shute a reed pheasant.' That wor jist like owd Bob. He got that fond o' watchin' birds an' larnin' o' their ways that arter a time it fared amost to hurt him to see a dead bird.

"But you'll be a-wantin' to be a-goïn' now as th' roke's (fog) a-liftin', so I'll jist give over marnderin' an' tell you how owd Bob come by his end. It wor all along o' their makin' a new road acrost th' marshes. There'd bin talk about it for years, but nowt had come on it. Howsumdever, at last th' County Council med th' road, and when it wor done a-course there had to be a cart-ferry instead o' owd Bob's smack-boät at Reedmere Staithe. Every one could see as how Bob wor

worried about it, but he kep hisself to hisself, as we say, though we all knew as how he wor a-hopin' he'd be gin charge o' th' new cart-ferry. Plenty o' folks had a good word to say for him; but th' Council's man wouldn't hear o' a one-armed man bein' put in charge, an' word come to Bob that another man had bin appynted to th' ferry, an' 'ud start workin' it on New Year's Day. Th' owd man fared right dunted (dazed) when he heerd it; he shut hisself up in his shod an', ceptin' when some one wanted a crossin', wouldn't let no one come a-nigh him. But when Chrismus come, an' th' Reedmere folks went to Yarmouth to do their Chrismus shoppin', he wouldn't take a ha'penny from any on 'em. So they wished him a merry Chrismus an' went their ways; an' when Chrismus wor over he sot all day in his shod a-lookin' out acrost th' river. On New Year's Eve I happened to go to Reedmere arter a net for my mill-sluice, so I thowt I'd hev a chat wi' th' owd man. I found him a-settin' over th' fire in his shod.

"When he tarned his face to me I skaace knowed him, he wor that aged an' weary-lookin'. I tried to get him to go up to th' 'Dog an' Duck' wi' me, thinkin' a little company 'ud du him good; but he shuke his head an' says he must keep an eye on th' ferry. Says I, 'I don't belaave there's a Reedmere man, woman, or chile out o' th' willage th' night'; but it worn't no good, he wouldn't hear o' leavin' th' ferry. So I sot down aside him an' tried to cheer him up a bit. But say what I would I couldn't git him to pay no heed to me.

"Nigh on ten o'clock, jist as I wor a-thinkin' about leavin' him, he says kinder suddent like, 'Listen, bor!' I held my breath an' listened, but nowt could I hear. 'What did you hear, bor?' says I. 'There's some one a-hailin' from th' tother side,' says he. I listened agin, but could only hear th' garglin' o' th' water an' th' rustlin' o' th' reed. 'Must ha' bin a calloo (curlew) or a hornpie (peewit) you heerd,' says I; but 'No,' says he, an' 'There 't be agin! I must cross over.' So seein' him set on it I went out wi' him to th' little landin'-stage where his boat wor moored.

"It wor a rimy night wi' a lot o' roke about, so that you couldn't clearly see th' tother side o' th' river. It worn't th'

sort o' night that any one, barrin' a flight-shuter, 'ud be likely to be abroad on th' marshes, an' I hadn't heerd a gun fired that day. Howsumdever, I give a hail in case owd Bob might ha' bin right about hearin' some one. But there worn't a sound come from th' tother side, an' I says to Bob, 'There bain't no one there, bor; you'd better tarn in agin.' But he wor set on crossin', so I thowt I'd go over wi' him, an' I went inter th' shod arter my net. When I come out agin he an' his boat wor gone, an' I could hear him a-scullin' acrost th' river. I waited a while, bein' minded to know which on us wor right about th' hailin'. Then I heerd owd Bob call to me, 'Are you there, Zack, bor?' an' I answered him. 'There bain't no one here,' says he; 'I could ha' sworn I heerd a hail.' Presently he called out agin, 'This 'ull be my last crossin''; an' I knew by th' woggle o' his oar he wor on his way back agin.

"All of a suddent he fared to stop scullin'. I hollaed out, 'Anything wrong, bor?' but he didn't answer me. From th' edge o' th' landin' I stared out into th' roke an' kep a-hailin' him. For a minute or two I couldn't see nuthin'; then I see Bob's boat a-driftin' toward th' reed—empty! I let out a shout what browt some men from th' nighest housen a-runnin' toward th' ferry, an' then I jumped inter my gun-punt an' rowed out inter mid-straam. But it worn't no good; owd Bob had med his last crossin'!"

WILLIAM A. DUTT.

OLD ENGLISH RUSTIC PSALMODY

AMONG the few things of the good old times that one would like to see revived are the village church orchestra and the singers' gallery. Most people probably know the fine picture of "A Village Choir," by T. Webster, R.A., in the South Kensington Museum, a picture which might have been painted from the original in almost any village of the early Victorian England. The lover of the quaint and the picturesque would give a good deal to see such a combination of musicians nowadays, but the clergy have long since made the quest impossible. It was a sad mistake of the clergy. No doubt, as Mr. Baring Gould says, the playing of the old orchestra was not very good, and the instruments were as often as not out of tune. No doubt also there was much quarrelling and little harmony among the performers. But an interesting institution of that kind should have been improved, not abolished. In those easy-going old days every village in England had its half-dozen men who could play on some instrument—clarinet, bassoon, fiddle, viol, flute, ophicleide, or what not. These instrumentalists, besides giving their services in the church on Sundays, attended all the local festivities, the wakes, the harvest homes, the revels, and the weddings. Where are their counterparts now? You will search for them with as much difficulty as Cœlebs experienced in searching for a wife. Half a dozen boys who can manage the concertina are all that you will find; while inside the church, instead of the rubicund bucolics, blowing their bugles and scraping their catgut, you have only the "pealing organ" and the "full-voiced choir," clad in surplices, and as conventionally commonplace as a charity concert. The old-time picturesqueness has entirely vanished.

For it was a picturesque spectacle, this of the village church orchestra. If we had no other evidence of it we should find it in abundance in the standard literature of the country. One has but to recall the doings of the musicians at Englebourne

Parish Church as detailed in "Tom Brown": of how the bass viol proceeded to the church for the usual rehearsals, and to gossip with the beadle; and how, at the singing of the verse in Psalm xciii., which ends with the line, "With dragons stout and strong," the trebles took up the words, and then the whole strength of the choir chorused again, "With dra-gons stout and strong," and the bass viol seemed to prolong the notes and to gloat over them as he droned them out, looking triumphantly at the distant curate, whose mild protests it was pleasant thus to defy. So minute an observer of English country life as George Eliot could hardly have missed the village orchestra. In "Felix Holt" there is a persistent plaint by one in authority about the obstinate demeanour of the singers, who decline to change the tunes in accordance with a change of hymns, and stretch short metre into long out of sheer "cussedness," irreverently adapting "the most sacred monosyllables to a multitude of wandering quavers." But the best description is that of the process and procedure of the singing at Shepperton Church. There, as the singing was about to begin, a slate appeared in front of the gallery, advertising in bold characters the psalm about to be sung. This was followed by the migration of the clerk to the gallery, where, in company with a bassoon, two key-bugles, a carpenter understood to have an amazing power of singing "counter," and two lesser musical stars, he formed the complement of a choir regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the next parish.

When such a body as this laid hands and voices on a "descriptive" psalm or hymn, then was the time to hear them at their best. The big butcher, fiddling all the while, would declare in a mighty solo, "I am Jo—Jo—Jo—Joseph," and then, having reiterated this information four or five times, would inquire with equal pertinacity, "Doth my fa-a-ther yet live?" the key-bugles, meanwhile, running away at a great pace, and the bassoon every now and then booming a flying shot after them. There was one psalm which never failed to rouse the enthusiasm of the village musicians. It was not the psalm in which the "great leviathan" is celebrated, though that,

too, had its admirers. It was Psalm xviii., especially the following lines:

And snatched me from the furious rage
Of threatening waves that proudly swelled.

The words "And snatched me" would be repeated severally by all the parts, who would then sing them two or three times in chorus. After that there would be a tossing and a tumbling over "the furious rage"; and at length, the single line having been worried and torn to the exhaustion of the most powerful lungs, the whole gallery—clarinet, bassoon, violoncello, the red-faced fiddler, who kept the village inn, the tall, thin tenor with the large nose—his principal vocal organ—and the rest—would all rush pell-mell into the "threatening waves that proudly swelled"; and having thus done their duty would march up the church path in a body, their instruments under their arms, feeling as important as if they were Wellingtons after Waterloo.

It was out of this excessive repetition of words that a good deal of the humour of the old-time church services flowed. The "repeat" time was a great institution with our forefathers. It was all right if the words sung to it were chosen with care and discrimination. The musical effect must certainly have been good, as the last line was taken up by all the parts and repeated with ever-increasing force and heartiness. Unfortunately it would sometimes happen that the last line would not bear this process of repetition with becoming dignity. Thus, in "Send down salvation from above," you had "Send down Sal" repeated three or four times before you got the full word "salvation." When you were set to sing "And take Thy pilgrim home," what you did in effect sing was "And take thy pill"; when you meant to bewail "My poor polluted heart," it was really "My poor poll" that you bewailed. "Oh, for a mansion in the skies" became "Oh, for a man"; "And learn to kiss the rod" was cut up into "And learn to kiss"; "And more exalted joys" was turned into "And more eggs"; "Stir up this stupid heart" sounded like "Stir up this stew"; and so on *ad infinitum*. There was really no end of these drolleries when the

"Calcuttas" and "Lydias" and "Mount Pleasants" of our forefathers were being heard in the churches. The more strictly "fuguig" tunes produced effects of a somewhat different kind. Here the words were repeated "quite promisc'us like," after the manner of the sailor's well-known description of an anthem. When the musicians' gallery adapted such a verse as this to a "fuguig" tune, they really reached the climax of sentiment and singing:

True love is like that precious oil
Which, poured on Aaron's head,
Ran down his beard, and o'er his robes
Its costly moisture shed.

It was not strange that Bishop Seabury wondered whether Aaron would have any hair left after he had been treated by the choir in the following fashion:

Its costly moist—ran down his beard—
Ure beard—his—beard—his—shed—
Ran down his beard—his—down his robes—
Its costly moist—his beard—ure shed—
Its cost—ure robes—his robes—he shed—
I-t-s—c-o-s-t-l-y—moist—ure—shed.

It was this specimen of rustic vocalism which so tickled the fancy of Prosper Merimée. "Who knows," said he, "where the oil finally did or did not run, or whether it was the oil or Aaron or the beard itself which eventually ran down?" The great majority of the people came to enjoy heartily the "repeat" and "fuguig" tunes, but they did not like them at first. Some members left the church altogether when they were introduced. One veteran declared that he would repeat "only when the Lord repeats"; and a couple of dead cats were deposited at the door of a parish clerk who had shown unusual zeal in the matter of "fuguig." This was no doubt meant to convey an indication of somebody's opinion about the poor clerk's cater-wauling!

That there was a good deal of diversion to be got out of the old parish clerks is clear from the fact that Pepys thought it an excellent jest to hear one of these functionaries begin

Psalm xxv., "which hath a proper tune to it, and then Psalm cxvi., which cannot be sung to that tune." This sort of thing must have happened pretty frequently, for the clerk's stock of tunes was never very extensive. In 1730 a would-be reformer declared that not more than five or six tunes were commonly used, and that many of the clerks were unable to sing even these correctly. Sixty years later a writer tells of having heard "York" tune sung fifteen times in a week at one church, while in another church he heard the "Gloria Patri" sung to the doleful strains of "Windsor." But the clerk had more serious faults than that of a restricted psalmody. Look at this from a weekly journal of the year 1741: "Some parish clerks, when party disputes run high, are proud to pick out a malignant psalm, one which they imagine suits with the state of public affairs or with some transactions in their own parishes, and casts a reflection upon them, whereby a part of the congregation is grievously scandalised, while the other is unseasonably diverted." One has heard of sermon texts being selected on this principle, as when Rowland Hill, in the first days of the chignon, preached a rousing discourse from the words "Top-not, come down"; but although I once knew a minister who applied Luther's "That old malicious foe intends us deadly woe" to Mr. Gladstone when he proposed disestablishing the Church of Scotland, it may be hoped that psalms and hymns are seldom chosen with a malignant purpose in these enlightened days. Now and again, the old clerk would himself, like Silas Wegg, drop into poetry. Some time after the return of King William III. from a visit to Holland, the bewigged clerk of a country parish stood up one Sunday morning and announced: "We will sing, to the praise and glory of God, a hymn of my own composing." And then he proceeded to "line out" as follows:

King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come;
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called Te D'um.

This was bad enough, but, to say truth, some of the metrical psalms which used to be sung were not much better. Thomas

Sternhold might have been an excellent "groome of the robes," but he made a very poor show when he started to set David running in rhyme. Nor did John Hopkins improve greatly on his predecessor. Indeed, the most that can be said for the pair whose names are so indissolubly associated with the old metrical Psalter is that they did their best to make a faithful rendering of the original. Their piety was emphatically better than their poetry: as Wesley said, they would rather provoke a Christian to turn critic than a critic to turn Christian. Perhaps a single specimen will serve. Take this:

They shall heap sorrow on their heads,
Which run as they were mad;
To offer to the idol gods—
Alas! it is too bad.

Too bad, indeed; sheer doggerel in fact. No wonder the witty Earl of Rochester, passing a country church where the clerk was droning out some such lines as these, no wonder he should be tempted to that impromptu which has been so frequently quoted:

Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms
When they translated David's psalms,
To make the heart right glad.
But had it been King David's fate
To hear thee sing and them translate—
By heaven! 'twould set him mad.

And yet they were so fond of this doggerel that they not only sang it, but made the clerk or the precentor "line it out" before singing. Of course, the practice of lining out has long been disused in England, though it still survives in remote corners of the Scottish Highlands. It originated, no doubt, in the backward state of education among the common people. The common people could not read, or were too poor to buy psalm-books, and this idea of giving out the line was conceived in their interests. It was at the best a practice of questionable advantage, involving as it did both the interest of the tune and the meaning of the words. When the clerk gave out: "The Lord will come, and He will not," and then, after the congre-

gation had sung these words, announced : " Be silent, but speak out," it must have required a keen perception to explain the double paradox according to the original :

The Lord will come ; and He will not
Be silent, but speak out.

It need hardly be said that under this practice ludicrous things often happened, more especially in Scotland, where the precentor held the place of the English parish clerk. Everybody knows Dean Ramsay's story of the precentor who, going through the psalm in piecemeal fashion, stopped to request some members of the congregation to allow the laird and his lady to get into their pew, and then went on to read the next line : " Nor stand in sinners' way." As often as not it was the clerk or the precentor himself who was made to look ridiculous by the lining out process. There is a well-authenticated anecdote of a young precentor who was one Sunday deputed for a more experienced leader. He began all right, giving out the line, " Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way," and declaiming the words with exceptional and inspiring eloquence. Unluckily, on returning to sing the line, he somehow failed to " catch on " to the tune. Once more he read out the line and tried to get hold of the melody, but with no better result than before. Still another attempt, and still another failure ; until at last an old farmer stood up, and, blurting out, " Indeed, laddie, I'm thinkin' the Lord has muckle need," went on with the tune himself. Of course, even without the lining out, there were frequent incidents of a humorous character. Old Sam Wesley, the father of the original Methodists, used to chuckle vastly over a joke that he once played on his precentor. It was the days of wigs, and Wesley, when he was done with his caput-covering, always made a present of it to his precentor. The latter was a little man, and the wigs of his superior almost buried his face out of sight. One Sunday morning the man of music looked more than usually ridiculous, and Wesley, irreverent as it may seem, could not resist giving out the psalm :

Like to an owl in ivy bush
That rueful thing am I.

Ministers, it is to be feared, often practised this kind of pleasantry, especially when they desired to be revenged on refractory singers. One cleric of last century had somehow incurred the wrath of the musicians' gallery, and the gallery as a consequence had struck work. But the cleric was not to be discomfited. Next Sunday he gave out the hymn, "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God," and, leading off the tune himself, the congregation joined as lustily as if the enraged musicians had been in their accustomed places. This was almost, though not quite, as good as the case of the New England divine who, unexpectedly finding his singers in the church during an interregnum of hostilities, looked significantly over the pulpit and then announced the hymn: "And are ye wretches still alive, and do ye still rebel?" Some cynic has declared that all anecdotes are lies, but these tales are as true as the Gospel itself. Ministers have the gift of humour as well as other people, and they are not always discreet in giving evidence of the possession.

And, by the way, speaking of New England reminds me of some of the humours connected with the psalmody of the early Puritan settlers. It seems to have been less varied but much more amusing than the psalmody of Old England. John Bull's rustics accepted their gallery orchestra without a murmur, regarding it evidently as the right thing in the right place. On the other hand, the New Englanders for a long time looked upon instrumental music in the churches as an invention of the devil, very much as the old Scots Presbyterians looked upon the "kist o' whistles." Even the modest pitch-pipe they held to be an instrument of evil omen, so much so that precentors used to have their pipes bestowed in a box with a leather binding like a book, and labelled ostentatiously in big letters, "HOLY BIBLE"! Later on, when it was proposed to introduce the "wee sinfu' fiddle," the innovation was widely resented because the instrument was alleged to savour too much of low tavern and dance music. In course of consultation and argument a charming compromise was arrived at: The violin would be allowed an entrance to the churches if the performers would only play it "wrong end up." The idea was, I suppose, that

an inverted fiddle partook of the nature of a bass viol, an instrument which—though some punster declared its use to be a *base violation* of Puritan principle—was regarded by the New Englanders as peculiarly fitted for accompanying the “sweetly solemn sound” of their voices.

As a matter of fact all the separate instruments of the church orchestra had to encounter a stout opposition before they were finally allowed a place in the singers’ gallery. When a clarinet was first employed in one church, an old member brought in a huge hunter’s horn, which he blew loud and long, to the complete rout of both clarinet-player and choir. When reproved for this unseemly behaviour, he answered boldly that “if one man could blow a horn in the Lord’s house on the Sabbath day he guessed he could too,” and he had actually to be bound over to keep the peace before the following Sunday. Many a minister declared openly that he would like to walk out of his pulpit when the hated instruments began. One preached a stirring sermon from the text, “I will not hear the melody of thy viols”; another discoursed from the words, “The songs of thy temple shall be turned into howling.”

A certain Mr. Brown of Westerly sadly deplored that “now we have only catgut and resin religion”; while a neighbour regularly announced the praise material by saying: “We will now sing and fiddle Psalm such-and-such.” Complaints were even made of the “indecorous” dress of the instrumentalists, which indicated nothing more serious than that on hot summer days the bass fiddler removed his coat and played in his shirt-sleeves. History repeats itself, though in somewhat different detail. It was only a summer or two ago that the more sensitive American citizens were exciting themselves over what they called the “shirt-waist.” Men unable to cope with the heat-wave discarded coat and vest, and perambulated the public places in their shirt-sleeves. Mr. Walter Damrosch, the Wagnerian conductor, suffered as much as anybody, but he did not dare to outrage the proprieties in presence of his chorus. At length, seeing that he was being quite overcome by the heat, the members sent him down a polite request that he should not mind them, but stand up bravely in his “shirt

waist." The conductor coyly yielded, and the ladies applauded him with enthusiasm. The innovation should be kept in mind in view of the possible restoration of the old-time orchestra. Between a gallery in shirt-sleeves and a gallery in surplices there would be no material difference after all.

Before we close, it may be interesting to remind ourselves how up to quite recent times the dearth of players was met by the use of barrel-organs and "dumb organists" in country churches. Indeed, it is only about fifty years ago that the barrel-organ began to go out of use in the church. I know of only one advantage that such an instrument could have had: it could not play wrong notes, though it might sometimes play the wrong tune. Certainly it seems to have behaved erratically enough at times. The latter-day organist knows something of the difficulty of managing a choir, but I suspect the barrel-organ proved even more troublesome. There is a good story connected with one which was once introduced into a mission church. All went well until the lad who managed it turned ill, and a deacon who thought he understood it undertook the manipulation of the instrument. At the service he got it through the first tune all right, but found himself unable to stop it. All the other deacons came to his assistance, and as their efforts only resulted in the organ starting another tune they carried it out of the place, and the congregation had the satisfaction of hearing it finishing its repertoire against a tombstone in the churchyard! On the whole, the modern organist, with all its faults, is preferable to *that*.

J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

JOHN P. KELLY'S DAUGHTER

I

"DADDY, I need a change of air."

John P. Kelly transferred his attention from the prospectus of a new company to his daughter, who had perched herself on the window-sill beyond his desk, with her feet on the chair which he had absently pushed forward for her.

She looked the picture of health and well-being, but there was a tiny wrinkle across her forehead and a slightly bored expression in her candid grey eyes.

"I'm so tired of being John P. Kelly's daughter!" she complained.

John P. Kelly elevated his grizzled eyebrows and waited for enlightenment.

"Not tired of *you*, dear!" His daughter descended from her perch to hug him, that he might make no mistake on that point, and then hopped up again. "But, oh! I *am* tired to death of the hypocrites who pretend to like and admire *me*, while all the time it is not me they are admiring, but the dollars!"

John P. Kelly looked at the bright hair gleaming against the dark oak of the window-panelling, at the lovely oval of the face it framed, the tender curves of the soft, flushed young cheeks and dimpled chin; but he forbore to suggest that admiration might not, in every case, be simulated. He heaved a profound sigh.

"I wish your mother had lived!" he said.

"So do I!" said the girl wistfully, with a suspicious fluttering of her eyelids.

There was a brief silence. John P. Kelly stared glumly at the prospectus which he was holding upside down. "So you want to get away from it all for a while, do you, my dear?" he said, with great gentleness. "Where had you thought of going?"

"When are you going to take me to see Europe and the Little Island?" his daughter asked persuasively.

He devoted a minute to considering the proposition. "I'm afraid I couldn't possibly take a holiday just now. I could manage it right enough next spring——"

"But I want to go *now*—right away! See?"

John P. Kelly saw.

"Mrs. Van Huysen is going over in the *Campania* next month. I might travel to Liverpool with her, and then go on to the Little Island by myself and stay there till you came for me in the spring. We've got cousins or something over there whom I could stay with, haven't we?"

"Why, yes"—doubtfully—"you could go to Evan Mylchreest, the doctor, your mother's brother. He'd be delighted to have you. But you would still be John P. Kelly's daughter, poppet; and people admire dollars all the world over. Though—great Scott! now I come to think of it, I don't believe I've ever written to Evan since the railway scoop in '90!—and unless he's heard of me some other way——"

"That is just what I thought," put in the girl eagerly. "If I went there, I should just be a country doctor's niece—a Little Miss Nobody. And it would be such fun."

"Um!—well, if you think so!" John P. Kelly ran his fingers through his whiskers and looked dubious. "It's a mighty little place, poppet—littler than you can imagine! England itself seems a mighty small speck of a country after you've lived on a continent; but the Isle of Man—why, you could drop it anywhere in England while you were out for a walk, and not be able to find it when you went back to look for it! And a place that size doesn't go in heavily for amusing itself. I sort of remember that your mother's party-frock, when she was a girl, lasted for five winters, with perhaps something fresh in the way of trimmings . . . a blue frock it was——"

"That makes my mind up!" laughed his daughter, clapping her hands. "You can book a berth for me in the *Campania* this afternoon, and I'll go off and telephone to Mrs. Van Huysen now. Oh, daddy! I have a presentiment that I'm going to have a perfectly lovely time! I'll take nothing but a couple of

the most inexpensive-looking frocks that are to be bought for money, and a two-dollar hat, and—well, I guess I shall have adventures!"

"Adventures?" queried the father, in a dry tone.

"I'll send you a full and faithful report every week—honest Injun! And that reminds me—I suppose I've got to be invited first, haven't I? You'd better write to Uncle Evan right away——" and she dropped to the carpet, and substituted a writing-pad and fountain-pen for the sheaf of papers awaiting her parent's consideration.

"Now——" she was rumpling up his grey locks, and rubbing a velvety cheek caressingly against his, when a preliminary half-page had been indited, and the fountain-pen halted for instructions—"tell him that I need a change badly."

The fountain-pen moved on obediently.

"Got that down? Tell him that you'd like me to know something of my relations, and if he feels like offering me hospitality while I am in the Island, you could manage to raise my passage out and home."

John P. Kelly put that down also.

"Oh, and you had better mention, dear, that if you have a prosperous year you may possibly come yourself in the spring to fetch me home. That will prepare him for your appearance on the scene by-and-by."

John P. Kelly chuckled.

All good Manx hope to go to America some day, just as all good Americans hope to go to Paris—it is the Land where there is Plenty of Room, a continent considerably raised out of the ocean by Providence for the accommodation of the Manx surplus population. And all good Manx, when they have made their piles, re-cross the Atlantic and make pilgrimage at least once to the cradle of their race, the little gorse-clad, mist-wrapped isle in the Irish Sea.

So that Dr. Evan Mylchreest was not at all surprised, but merely pleased, when John P. Kelly, the brother-in-law in America of whom he had heard nothing for eight or nine years, wrote him as casual a note as though they had only parted the

week before, proposing to send his daughter to the Isle of Man for change of air and to call for her in the ensuing spring.

He handed the letter with a cheerful air to Evan Mylchreest the younger, his son. "It will be pleasant to have a young girl in the house, eh, Eevie?—a change for us as well as for her. And there are many little things she can turn her hand to in the house," sighed the good doctor, who, like his brother-in-law, was a widower. "They say American girls are all good cooks. I hope this one is, with all my soul, for Keziah's pies are simply homicidal—though I don't like to hurt the poor old creature's feelings by telling her so."

II

*Extracts from letters to John P. Kelly, New York, from
Mona Kelly, Cronk-y-shian, Isle of Man:*

"July 22.

"Oh, daddy, you didn't half tell me what the Island was like! I grant that it is small—it nearly made me mad at first, such a little pocket-handkerchief of a place, a mere traveller's sample in islands, to call itself 'a separate nation'—but it is the cunningest little speck on the face of the ocean, anyway. And, oh! to think of all the crowing I might have done at school, if I had only been here first! The Johnston-Fawcett girls put on airs because their grandfather came from Virginia, but they will simply curl up with envy when I tell them that I have seen the estate that has been in our family for eight hundred years, and the old sedan-chair up in uncle Evan's lumber-attic in which great-great-great-grandmother used to be carried on Sundays to that cunning little church up on the cliff, and another great-great-grandmother's tomb in the ruined cathedral, next to a cute old bishop's who fought for King Charles in the Civil War. (I *think* he fought, anyway, for the Manx bishops were all sword bishops, weren't they?) And there are some old, old brocade gowns in a chest in a little cupboardy sort of place off my bedroom, that must have been part of the trousseau of one of mother's ancestresses who died very

young more than a hundred years ago, Uncle Evan says. I rather fancy he would give me one if I like to coax for it.

"He is a dear. So is Eevie—he is going to Germany after Christmas to learn to be an oculist, and he is awfully tall and clever. They are both just as nice to me as they can be, though Eevie and I have had a mild difference or two already, zephyrous hints of breezes to come. For all his cleverness he is woefully in need of education of a sort, and I verily believe that he imagines girls were made in one of Nature's odd moments, when the important work of making Man was safely accomplished, like the little cookie-pigs, with currants for eyes, that cook used to make for me with the scraps of dough left over from her baking. I should love to have him in New York for a week! just to let him see how other people treat girls (and me in particular)!"

"There are shoals of summer-boarders at Ramsey and the other towns, but only one here at Cronk-y-shian. He is a literary man—a play-writer, I think—who was sent here by his doctor to recuperate after an illness. Uncle Evan has him in hand now, and he comes up nearly every evening to sit and smoke with him, or to instruct Eevie and me. He finds *me* very stupid, I fancy, and Eevie very stolid."

"July 29.

"Uncle Evan took the opportunity yesterday, when we were alone, to ask me whether I was supplied with pocket-money. He said he knew what an expensive trip it was, and that he guessed you had had to pinch to pay my passage over, and he hoped I would always remember that he was my own mother's brother, and not treat him like a stranger . . . Wasn't it sweet of him? I felt an awful little hypocrite.

"Two days after I got here he asked me if I could cook; and he looked so sort of wistful, and evidently had such a profound and touching belief in the cooking powers of the Max O'Rell kind of American woman, that I hadn't the heart to say No. Sometimes I wish I had! Behold me in the kitchen with one of Keziah's aprons tied round me (her waist measures forty inches at least, so I'm not scrimped for room), making things out of a

yellow cookery book polished by the grease of three generations. The greasiest recipes are the safest, and cheapest. I know when I start on one of them that I am following in the grease-marks which more experienced women than myself planted on the sands of time. My successes go up to table, and I bribe Keziah to say nothing about my failures. But even Uncle Evan looked puzzled the day he was driving into Ramsey, and I put down 'a brace of giblets' on the list of things he was to bring from the poulterer's! And I had planned such a lovely giblet-pie for dinner, too. Eevie and Mr. Dunstan (that's the play-writing man) say 'Giblets!' now, instead of 'Great Scott!' and things like that, and I get fizzling mad.

"Mr. Dunstan is a poet as well as a dramatist, but he wears his hair quite short, and is rather good-looking. He is writing a play which he hopes will be produced by Irving. He reads bits of it to me when we are sitting in the orchard. I do all my chores out there—picking peas and peeling apples and so on—and he says that our orchard is the shadiest, coolest place in the whole of Cronk-y-shian. I'm sure he will be a famous dramatist some day—some of the bits he reads to me are lovely—but the critics haven't been kind to the poor man so far. He takes great care to explain everything which he fears I might not understand. Yesterday he condescendingly stopped short in a reading to translate '*Aut Cæsar aut nullus*' for me. I felt sorely tempted to drop a curtesy (and the apples I was paring) and say 'Good sir, I was Latin Prize-girl my last year at school. . . .' Does he think American girls are educated at all, I wonder!

"Angéle will faint when she sees my hands. She will have to manicure me up for ever so long before I dare show myself again. But I am having a perfectly delightful time."

"August 12.

"To-day is my birthday.

"Is it really only two years since I came out? I seem to have got through a century of dissipation since that first ball, and I am positively growing young again at Cronk-y-shian. I am ensuring a future for my complexion by going to bed at

Arcadian hours and rising with the lark, and I am learning how it feels to be treated as a very youthful person indeed, with very youthful and crude opinions on all subjects.

"But about my birthday. Your cheque came last night, daddy. Now I ask you impartially, how *do* you think I am going to get it cashed without giving myself away? You overlooked that, didn't you? Better send me a cheque for—say three dollars, with the promise of more at Christmas. Uncle Evan has given me an umbrella—my other was borrowed *sans cérémonie* on the Manx packet by some one who presumably forgot to return it. Eevie gave me a nice pair of gloves, and Mr. Dunstan wrote me the loveliest birthday sonnet—

"Oh, *hang!*—there goes the door-bell again, for about the dozenth time since I sat down to write! Uncle is out, Eevie is knee-deep in medical books upstairs, Keziah has gone to hunt up fresh eggs from the neighbours, as our hens are not laying well, and the girl who helps in the house has gone home. And I have inked the cuff of my best pink cambric waist with putting my pen down again in a hurry! And that sort of trifle matters when you have appearances to keep up and expect three-dollar cheques at long intervals.

"It was an old woman at the door. Wanted to see Uncle, of course. Flatly impossible, with her impaired vision, as he must be three miles away by this time. She described 'a pain in her bress that was plaguin' her mortal bad, aw yis, ter'b'l! Never had the lek as bad before! Couldn't *I* be giving her anything for it?' I couldn't. I have to draw my line somewhere. But I remembered Eevie, and called him down to try his prentice hand upon her. I shouldn't care to be experimented on by a medical student myself—life is sweet, even at twenty—but she seemed enchanted to take the risk.

"With such innocent excitements are my days filled! Presently it will be my pleasing duty to visit the kitchen and see that the kettle is not boiling dry, and that the hens are not making a raid on the pantry, of which the door is invariably left open.

"I am tempted to ask myself whether I *am* the girl who danced at her first ball two years ago to-night, in a Paris frock

and pearls? By the way, Uncle Evan casually inquired yesterday if I could dance. If I could dance! What would he say if he could see my room at home with the walls covered with cotillon favours?

"My days among the (socially) dead are passed! But I like being socially dead, daddy—*pro tem.*, of course. There are distinct elements of fun in it. And it is most instructive to find out one's own exact and true size when one is not standing on a pile of dollars——

"That door-bell again! But the ringer this time is my fellow sojourner among the socially dead. I can see a bit of his shoulder in the porch. . . ."

Note by John P. Kelly: Sonnet not enclosed.

Further note by John P. Kelly: No mention of fellow sojourner among the socially dead in five following letters.

Postscript to a later letter:

"P.S.—There is something else I ought to tell you, but I don't know how to begin! Daddy, would you be very angry—would it be a very great disappointment to you—if I didn't make what the world—our fashionable, mercenary world at home—calls a brilliant marriage? Had you sort of set your heart on it particularly? Wouldn't you rather that I married a man who loves me honestly for myself, as you loved mother in the old days before you went to America and made your pile? Those old days when you ran away to Whitehaven to get married because grandfather objected to you on the ground that you were too young and inexperienced to undertake the responsibilities of matrimony—those old happy, hard-working days that in your secret heart you love to remember, daddy, and that you have so often told me of! Would you be very angry and unforgiving, daddy, if I were to tell you——? but I think I will tell you next week instead, and leave what I have just said to sink and prepare the ground."

Telephonic message from John P. Kelly, West Fifty-seventh Street, to White Star Line offices: "Can you let me have a berth in to-morrow's boat? Urgent."

III

HUBERT DUNSTAN paced up and down his room, in that condition of complete mental abstraction and absorption which, for some occult reason, is called a brown study. The April twilight deepened outside, and the swiftly-moving hansom lamps twinkled more brightly in the greyness. Once he paused in his promenade to take down one of the cards stuck in the glass over his mantelpiece and verify the hour of an engagement; but the action was mechanical, and hardly interrupted his reverie.

Success had come to him, after weary years of waiting. He was a famous dramatist now, known also as the author of a couple of society novels, and his latest play was in rehearsal and would be given to the public in a fortnight. Sundry critic friends, and the popular actor and actress who were to interpret the play, had told him that "Maud Müller," the powerful story of human limitations and vain regret which he had built upon Whittier's charming poem, was the best thing he had ever done; and he knew that the verdict was a true one.

Yet it was not of the play he was thinking, but of a woman's face, seen for a brief instant that afternoon in Bond Street as a carriage flashed past him. It had startled him by its strange likeness to another face that he had known, and kissed, five years before. A chance resemblance will sometimes loose old memories upon us in a surprising fashion.

How long ago it seemed since that summer in the little green island in the Irish Sea! He wondered what had become of Mona. He often wondered what had become of her. He prided himself on being one of those who always remain faithful—at heart—to their early loves, whereas he was simply the possessor of an excellent memory, a confusion of ideas which is by no means as uncommon as people think.

A sigh escaped him as he unlocked a drawer in an *escritoire* and took out a small water-colour sketch, at which he looked long and fixedly. It was but a rough, impressionist daub, but he had had rather a pretty talent for that kind of thing in the old days, and he had suggested with sufficient fidelity the low orchard wall, green lichened; a girl's face under a sun-bonnet, with sweet, innocent, mischievous eyes; and a background of sea and gulls, and wind-swept cliffs and slopes purpled with heather.

There had been a pastoral, Arcadian charm about those warm summer days at Cronk-y-shian. The charm held him yet.

"Alas for maiden, alas for judge!" Fate had treated them both unkindly. That was stating the case poetically. In a minor degree he took some (not much) of the blame upon himself. It was not wise of him to spend so much of his time in the doctor's orchard, listening to the humming of the bees and reading poetry to the doctor's pretty niece. That kind of holiday leads to complications.

He remembered the day when he had painted the sketch. It was the day before he went away. How charming Mona looked that afternoon! (There had been some excuse, certainly, for his folly.) He had found her perched in the fork of an ancient damson-tree; the prettiest feet in the world, shod with number three high-heeled shoes, dangling above a short ladder; her white fingers busily transferring the purple fruit to a basket. And he had swung himself up into another fork of the same tree and watched her at her work. Romeo up a damson-tree instead of a balcony, and Juliet in a sun-bonnet. He had been "up a tree" with a vengeance, for they were engaged, and he was wondering how he might slip out of the engagement with the most tact and credit.

He laid the heavier share of the blame on Eevie's shoulders. He argued that if Eevie had not aspired to the *rôle* of god-in-the-machine there would have been no complication. But that cub of an Eevie—the blessings he had called down on Eevie's head were not printable—had meddled unjustifiably. He had had the cheek to regard himself—*vice* his father, paying professional visits in a shabby dog-cart—as his cousin Mona's

natural guardian and protector; and he had demanded to know whether Dunstan meant to marry Mona, or whether he was merely making love to her to pass the time.

He put it brutally like that. Eevie's manners were those of the Stone Age. And the doctor had unluckily overheard part of the dispute and desired an explanation.

A man who declines to face the guns is not necessarily to be stigmatised as a coward. His refusal may be the deliberate outcome of a carefully-cultivated talent for evading the disagreeable.

Dunstan shrank from the disagreeable as a cat shrinks from water; hence it was out of the question that he should say to Dr. Mylchreest: "I confess to a harmless flirtation with your pretty niece, but—I cannot marry her. It would be madness for me to throw myself away on a girl without fortune or influential connections; with nothing, in fact, but fine eyes and a complexion. Ambition is my plighted bride. Art permits no divided allegiance," &c. &c.

It being manifestly impossible for him to say this to the genial, single-minded, but incorrigibly Philistine doctor, he had taken the only dignified and tactful alternative. For the short remainder of his stay at Cronk-y-shian he and Mona had been "engaged."

Well, it had had its pleasant side. (It had been perilously pleasant, for that matter—witness the sketch in the locked drawer, and the brown study!) The artistic temperament takes short views . . . and the idyll was charmingly staged.

Sometimes . . . sometimes he almost wished he had married her, and taken all risks . . . she was so sweet! But if he had married her, instead of sending that regretful letter which explained to her that he had allowed love to overrule his better judgment, and that he saw so little prospect of financial prosperity and consequent marriage that conscience impelled him to release her from her engagement and leave her perfectly free: (somehow he had never felt quite satisfied with that letter; it read a little lamely) if he had married her he might now have been rustivating in a suburban villa, with a family, butcher's bills, one servant, an inartistic, cheap paper on the drawing-

room walls, and Mona with her complexion ruined by worry and the London smuts!

He laid the sketch back in its hiding-place with something like a groan. Simultaneously a silver-toned clock on the mantelpiece chimed the half-hour, and he dressed in haste and went out to dine with the Countess of Skipton—*née* Miss Jennie Van Huysen, of New York—for whom he was writing a little play which was to be performed by distinguished amateurs before a distinguished audience for the benefit of a patriotic fund.

He was sent in to dinner with one of the distinguished amateurs aforesaid, a young lady who was anxious that a part should be written to fit her, as if a playwright were a modiste. Her views on dramatic art, which she surveyed through the wrong end of the telescope, amused him; and it was not till he had finished his soup that, turning to answer a question from the neighbour on his other side, he saw, near the further end of the long table, the woman whose resemblance to Mona had startled him earlier in the day.

It must be the same! There could not be two women in London the mere glimpse of whom was sufficient to set his heart thumping erratically, and to bring up an unbidden vision of his shy, sweet, half-tamed Maux sweetheart, the girl who—to do her rustic charm justice—had made an impression on him which other women had failed to equal or efface! Allowing for the difference between Mona in a cotton blouse and serge skirt and this woman with pearls of price around her throat and fragrant lilies resting against the corsage of a gown that had probably cost its creator sleepless nights, the likeness was really extraordinary.

Recognising the gown, he remembered that its wearer had been one of an intimate group in the drawing-room before dinner, but he had only received a hazy impression of a graceful figure and a well-poised head. The face had been averted from him.

She smiled at some remark made by her companion, with a fleeting upward glance of mirth from under veiling lashes. The smile, the trick of the swiftly-dropped lids, thrilled him.

At that moment, chance, or the magnetism of his glance, drew her eyes upon him. She started perceptibly, and a wave of bright vermilion flushed her cheeks, retreating as quickly as it had come.

It was Mona.

She had recovered her self-possession, if she could be said to have lost it, and, with a half-smile of recognition, had turned away again.

His heart gave a bound, and then seemed to stand still for a long, sickening minute.

Mona here!—at a countess's dinner-table! There was some horrible mistake somewhere.

He pinched himself under the shelter of the table-cloth to make sure that he was awake, and not dreaming. He had over-worked lately, and lost his sleep—could he have reached the stage when the eye sees things not palpable to the other senses? It *couldn't* be Mona!

"You are looking at the new American beauty." His table companion's voice sounded beside him. "What style those American women have, even the plain ones—and I suppose Miss Kelly is like the majority of her countrywomen, a girl without a grandfather! Wouldn't she make a lovely Galatea for the *tableaux*? She was all in white last night at the Nortons', and looked like a piece of Greek sculpture."

"I don't think I ever—met her—before," Dunstan heard himself say.

"No?" The distinguished amateur's tone was faintly supercilious, and increased his bewilderment, implying he hardly dared to guess what. "I am not one of those who pretend that grapes out of reach are necessarily indigestible," she pursued. "I am not sure that I would not exchange my grandfathers for Miss Kelly's millions, were the exchange possible. It must be lovely to have unlimited command of money and be young and good-looking enough to enjoy it!"

Dunstan sat through the rest of the meal in a species of trance.

A man with whom he was slightly acquainted sat down by him after the ladies had left the room, and remarked that the new American girl had looks as well as money.

"Who is she?" the playwright murmured, his eyes fixed on his glass.

"Who *is* she? Why, she's John P. Kelly's daughter!—his only child!—and he died last year. You've heard of John P. Kelly, of course, the man who was said to control more railroads than any other man in America."

"Of course," Dunstan echoed.

She was at the piano when the men went into the drawing-room. Lady Skipton was leaning over her, with a hand on her shoulder, turning the leaves of a music-book discontentedly.

"No, I can't find it," she was saying, as Dunstan drew with hearing. "Just sing us one of your Manx ballads, Mona. You know them without book. Don't you remember that one with the swinging chorus—about 'Ramsey Town, shining by the sea'?"

Mona's hands touched the keys tenderly. The first chords brought uneasiness of spirit to the playwright—he could not tell why. Did she steal one glance at him as he stood mute and wretched by the piano?—he was not sure. The sweet, mocking notes filled the room, sung with a swinging Manx lilt—

"'Twas once I loved a lass;
I swore I loved her true!
And so I did . . . as long as we
Held Ramsey Town in view."

IV

DUNSTAN went home to his chambers to sit through the black hours of the night alone, staring at the grey embers of a dying fire, which expired at four A.M. as a broad hint to him to go to bed.

He looked at the ashes and shivered. Were they emblematic of a dead love? He would have given a great deal to know. He sat by the now whitening embers while the room grew cold with the raw coldness which precedes the dawn, and said "Good heavens!" at intervals.

He could not think of anything else to say.

He did not know how he lived through the days until he saw her again. He only knew that Mona had come into his life once more, and that he was hers utterly, to keep or to cast away.

He met her once in the park, and Lady Skipton presented him.

"Mr. Dunstan and I have met before," Mona said, demurely.

The night came when fashionable London crowded the theatre to see his new play.

The curtain had risen upon the last act before he took his courage in both hands and entered Lady Skipton's box. There was no longer any shadow of doubt as to the success of the piece. There had been no stir of applause during the last hour. None was needed. The voices of the players cut through a tense stillness in which a breath would have been audible. And of the eyes riveted on the stage not many were dry.

For of all sad words that wake an echo in the hearts of men and women, the saddest and most futile are these: "It might have been!"

Tears were running down Lady Skipton's cheeks, and Mona sat back in the shadow of the curtain, and her eyes were wet as she lifted them to Dunstan's for a second when he sat down trembling in the chair just behind her.

"I knew you would be great some day!" she whispered impulsively. "But this . . . oh! I can't say any more about it . . ." Her voice shook, and failed her.

He forgot everything except the tears that trembled on her lashes. His hand covered the one that lay in her lap, unobserved.

"Mona!" he said hoarsely. "Mona! Don't you know—have you not guessed—what my inspiration was? Whatever is good in the piece—whatever is worthy to live—my love for *you* taught me."

He meant it honestly. Some natures are never consciously insincere. They change their point of view as naturally as a chameleon changes colour. Her hand fluttered under his as if

it would withdraw, but he held it fast. He misinterpreted the look she turned quickly upon him.

"Mona! Is 'what might have been' still possible? or do I sue for pardon too late? Oh, my dear, I am not worthy of you . . . I shall never be worthy of you . . . but if it were possible for you to forgive——"

"I forgave you long ago," she said, very gently, withdrawing her hand with a decision about which there could be no mistake this time. "But—I think I ought to tell you that I am to be married next month—" her voice was full of pity for him, but she was powerless to keep back the sudden soft, rosy glow from her face—"to Eevie."

The storm of applause burst at last—deafening, terrific, loud as the thunder of equinoctial seas on the shingle. The house rang with the imperative cry—"Author! Author!" And he stood before the footlights, bowing mechanically.

They said afterwards that his success was too much for him. In the hour of his triumph his white, haggard face and glittering, expressionless eyes were like those of a man who tastes the bitterness of defeat.

A. BLAIR LEES.

SUMMER COBWEBS

"When St. Barnaby bright smiles night and daie
 Poor Ragged Robin blooms in the hay.
 The scarlet lychnis, the garden's pride,
 Flames at St. John the Baptist's tide.
 From Visitation to St. Swithin's showers
 The Lilie white reigns as queen of the flowers.
 And poppies a sanguine mantle spread
 From the blood of the dragon St. Margaret shed."

THAT last conceit is too delightful to be disturbed, yet we always put back this Calendar for our own delectation and give St. Barnaby, whose day comes always near to Whitsunday, the poppies of consolation. Let him have Ragged Robin also.

Dear Robin. Sometimes one thinks of him as a very saint among flowers. We are in a pensive mood; it is a perfect evening; the lights are paling in the sky, but we can just see the pink lamps of our dear friend in the marsh, and we think of light in waste places, and "good" fancies crowd our mind. Another mood and our *lychnis-flor-cuculi* bears another semblance. He is a will-o'-the-wisp, a "wandering fire," as we see his silvery-pink stars shimmering here and there among the reeds and grasses, a very Puck in flower-land, Robin—good fellow. But the scarlet and the white, sleep-giving poppies, leaving out of sight the Iceland in their fragile loveliness and the Shirleys in their coats of many colours, are always associated in my mind with the Son of Consolation, and there are many suggestions to be worked out from the story of the flower's origin. Called into being by Demeter's grief for Persephone gone into the underworld, it rose to console her for her daughter's absence, and was therefore fitly used by the Greeks and Romans in their chaplet-offerings to the dead: their floral prayers that their friends might rest in peace. There is great appropriateness in giving the scarlet lychnis, the red campion

of country walks, to St. John Baptist, whose mission was to bear witness to the Light. The name probably settled the choice; and, though it was called *λύχνος*, say utilitarians, because the down on the leaves furnished wicks for lamps, there is quite enough in the shape of the flower and the part it plays in illuminating the landscape to justify us in calling it a Midsummer lamp. Granting this, we cannot have St. John robbed of his special family of plants, the St. John worts. What would Midsummer's Eve be without that plant of starry blossoms which "hinders witches of their will"? Whether we content ourselves with the large-blossomed shrubs in our gardens, whose presence there is supposed to shield the house from lightning stroke and other dangers, or wander into the woodlands to seek the Tutsan, which supplies the "balm o' warriors' wounds," or into the lanes to gather as many different varieties of the *Hypericacææ* as we can, we feel that we are following old traditions if we provide ourselves with representations of any branch of the St. John family to grace the festival. If it has a right to its old name *Fuga daemonum*, and can put evil demons to flight, it is worth while wearing it and hanging it over our doors and windows, as peasants used to do in France and Germany. Sir Walter Scott lets us know in what veneration it was held in Scotland. Long ago young men and maidens used to dance round the bonfires lighted on St. John's Eve, wearing chaplets of St. John's wort and vervain, and bunches of the same were thrown into the fire—possibly by old men and children. London, which is conservative to old customs, as any one who has been in the neighbourhood of Holborn on May Day can testify, kept up the observance of the festival by wreathing house-doors with cool switches of fennel and delicate birch boughs out of which shone the stars of St. John's wort amidst the gleam of lilies.

Ah! those lilies. If we do get any hot weather in July, how grateful we feel for the weeks from the second to the fifteenth of the month being cooled and yet made lustrous by the tall lilies in their white magnificence. What is it which gives lilies their peculiar grace and charm? They are not flowers to fondle, though we may dare to caress lilies of the

valley; there is a stateliness in their beauty which makes us feel we must kiss their hands rather than their cheeks, but we love to pay homage to them. It is noticeable that there is scarcely a country which does not give us a lily-legend. Egyptians and Hebrews, Persians and Greeks, Romans and the countries in which Romance languages are spoken, all have their fancies embodied in tradition, legend, or custom. We have always thought a story from Spain one of the most touching. Once upon a time there lived, near Seville, a boy, who, if not exactly an idiot, might well be called "God's Fool," the only son of his mother, and she a widow. Moreover, she was poor, she needed what a son might earn. She sent him to school. He could not learn from books. She put him to learn a trade. His mind would not instruct his hands. She begged the Father of a neighbouring monastery to take him in as a lay brother. Averse from doing so the Superior refused her request at first, then yielded to it out of pity. There every effort was made to teach him religion. What was the use of putting doctrine before one whose mind was so vacant of ideas, so infantile in working, that his creed, his breviary, his rule of life, consisted of three sentences :

"I believe in God ;

"I hope for God ;

"I love God."

Yet if to labour is to pray, he prayed ; for he worked diligently with his hands. If religion is largely to love one another, he was a true Religious, for he never broke the law of charity ; and if devotion be a frame of mind and not a formula, he was devout, and was never so happy as when he was in chapel, which he fled to when his work was over for the day, and during the intervals of rest in the working hours. "What good does it do him to go into chapel?" asked one of the novices. After he had seen the boy in chapel one day, and heard the tone in which he repeated the only words he knew, that novice did not ask the question again. The boy died with the look on his face it wore in chapel. He was buried in the cemetery near Seville, and a beautiful lily was soon seen on

his grave. The grave was opened, and the root of the lily was found in the heart of the idiot boy.

Roses are never far apart from lilies in association as in material space. The old calendar quoted at the head of this paper goes on to say :

"Then under the wanton Rose again
Which blushes for penitent Magdalen,"

but the reason for the blush is carried back by one old writer to Paradise, who says Eve's kisses brought colour to petals originally white. Greek and Roman poets affirm that the rose was white first of all, that it was the blood of Aphrodite which made the first red rose, her foot having been pricked by a thorn. According to Zoroaster roses had no thorns till the evil power Ahriman came into the world. To every angel is assigned a flower, but there is one rose, Zoroaster believed, which is the peculiar possession of an archangel very high exalted. The Persians believe that it is the nightingale's love for roses which makes them sing, and that they are always to be seen in Spring fluttering round rose bushes. The Turks used not to like to tread upon a fallen rose-petal, believing the flower to have been hallowed by Mahomet.

The Hindoos say that one of the wives of Vishnu was found in a rose. The Greeks placed it above and before all other flowers. So did the Romans, and we all know their habits and customs about wreaths for guests at a banquet and offerings for the dead. The rose played a great part in the Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century, by order of a council held at Nismes, Jews were required to wear a rose on their breasts to distinguish them from Christians. Thibaut, the troubadour, one of the counts of Champagne, whose home was the quaint town of Provins, brought back with him from the fourth crusade what he believed to be the Rose of Sharon. He planted it, and soon the gardens of Provins were bowers of roses. In festivals wreaths were made of these roses for personal and church decoration ; the *Conserves de Roses de Provins* became famous throughout France, and in course of time the rose came over to England and became historical. This was the manner of its

introduction. Edmund of Lancaster, the Crouchback, married Thibaut's widowed daughter-in-law. There happened to be at that time a mayor of Provins, who objected to too early hours, and who ordered the curfew to be rung an hour later than had been the custom to ring it. Up rose a mob at once, attacked the mayor in his house, and killed him. As soon as he heard of the outrage Edmund, the Crouchback, hurried to Provins and avenged the mayor and the cause of law and order. It is said that the town never recovered from the abrupt thinning of the population caused by punishments, and by Edmund taking back with him numbers of the tradesmen to England. He took something besides tradesmen and the yard measure, peculiar to Provins; that something was the rose, destined to be known in a much more serious strife than was waged at Provins over the ringing of a bell, for it became the famous red rose of the House of Lancaster.

The Rose of Innocence is the name given to the white rose, which it was the custom in the valley of the Engadine for a young girl to give to an acquitted prisoner, whose guiltlessness of the crime charged upon him had been proved. In Rosenberg's book on roses, published early in the seventeenth century, the same property is claimed for the rose as was attributed to St. John's wort—the power of driving away evil spirits. Rosenberg believed it to be a panacea for diseases, and capable of reproducing itself if burned to ashes.

Besides the decorative uses to which roses were put, uses often symbolical and typical as well as ornamental, they served practical purposes, such as the payment of grants by vassals to their lords. A deed dated "Haustede, on Sunday next before the Feast of All Saints 3 Henry iv. 1402," grants to Thomas Smith from Sir William Clopton a piece of ground called Dokmedwe, in Haustede, on condition that a rose be paid yearly at the Nativity of St. John Baptist to Sir William and his heirs, in lieu of all services. In 1576 Bishop Richard Cox of Ely granted Christopher Hatton the greater part of Ely House, Holborn, for twenty-one years, if the tenant paid a red rose on Midsummer Day each year for the gate-house and garden, the bishop reserving for himself the right of walking

through the gate-house to stroll about in the gardens, and of gathering twenty bushels of roses every year.

Rose legends are almost as numerous as the different kinds of roses ; many of them possessed of a charm as fascinating as rose-perfume, some whimsical and strained, many very suggestive. Perhaps the most beautiful are those which are best known, just as rose-lovers will turn affectionately to old-fashioned roses, and say, "but these are 'hard to beat,'" We see that they have been venerated by Jew and Christian, Egyptian and Turk, Persian and Greek, Roman and modern European nations. They figure as the type of infantile purity, they strew the bodies of the dead, they bind the brows of revellers and adorn the helmets of warriors. They have decked altars and marriage feasts ; nay, have been made into sweet dishes themselves. They have caused strife and have served as peace-offerings. They distil drops to soothe the sick and indulge the luxurious. Why go on enumerating more facts about them ? Perhaps Rosenberg was not far wrong when he claimed such extensive power for the queen of flowers.

"The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose."

ENA SCHOBERT.

HOSPITAL YARNS

I.—"THE MOTHER"

SEARLE was strumming "Under the Double Eagle" on the stringy piano, and Barton and I were smoking and talking words of wisdom. It was about a woman—the new Meiklejohn Ward-Sister from St. Aloysius's.

Barton has no illusions about women, especially nurses. On the contrary, he is a bit of a terror to recruits, the way he flings things about if they are wrong. "*What's this? Take it to the deuce, and get out of the way.*" He tells Skittles, before patients, that she ought to be impaled on a stake and burned at one publicly in Hyde Park, though Skittles is on the staff. He is good-looking, an athlete, sports an eyeglass, a gorgeous hand with the knife, and my senior by many years: yet they all say they hate Barton. He does treat them as if they belonged to the lower animals. When I was new to it, and used to see him with two or three probationers round him, tumbling over each other to execute his orders, I always thought of "Man—and the lower animals." They seemed to fall into the category naturally. So at first I was taken in completely. I really believed some of the leaky fools when they told me in private how much they hated Surgeon Barton. My self-respect was lowered painfully when I discovered that not only had I been such a terrific bounder as to allow myself to be the recipient of such a bit of confidential information about my friend and a better man, but that the information itself was all a lie; and that the very nurses who imparted it would regard it as an honour any day to be bled to death by him. Yes: it was a bit humiliating, and made me consider a while, when I learned that women never pay too much attention to any one they appear to like very much; never go much out of their way for him; while for a man they "hate," it seems they can never do enough. "How I *hate* that man!" they would say—say it to each other, looking calmly

into each other's eyes—and the next minute be fighting with each other to be the first to fetch and carry for him. On the other hand, when they "hate" a woman they really hate her, it seems. Barton says I speak truth when I say that women are hens; adding, himself: "But they have their use—they have their use." Whereas, when I affect being a misogynist, and say that women are liars, he says: "Not a bit of it," and goes on smoking. I suppose they don't lie to him. Anyhow, it's clear he has the game in his hands whatever it is. Also he is a man and has no illusions. And the new Meiklejohn Ward-Sister Bouchier, likewise, was different from other women.

Searle changed the tune to "Mandalay" just as I said of Nurse Bouchier that she had pretty feet; and Barton, who comes from the Shires, said: "Who? Nurse?" (He had got to call her "Nurse," as if she were the only one in the house.) "Yes: clean; no hair about the heels." This reminded me of her hair—of the woman as a whole, and I thought, and we smoked. Barton was evidently thinking of something else. It struck twelve, and Searle got up to turn in. Funny!—he hadn't heard us talking, yet as he went out of the smoke-room, he said: "Say! that new Meiklejohn-woman's a trump, anyhow." (Searle is from the States.) Then I saw that Barton knew at once whom he meant, and was thinking about her. So I was glad. Barton is the kind of man who makes you feel glad when you know he is thinking about a woman you like. He only muttered something about her knowing her work, as Searle went out.

Skittles said she was forty if she was a day; and as Skittles knew that she had been fourteen years in St. Aloysius's, I gave her nineteen more, and said I didn't believe she was over thirty-three. She didn't look past thirty. Her hair was yellow like ripe corn; or, as Searle said, like marmalade; or, as I thought afterwards, like the *capilla matris dei* of the old monks. She wore it rather tightly and plainly drawn down on each side of her head, and bundled up loosely at the back. Skittles admitted to a yard and a half of it when down. This was a revelation to me; and I used to stare at it and wonder

how it was all put up so small. Her face was greyish by daylight; and her eyes made people in delirium and other people keep quiet. You had to speak or drop your eyes when "the Mother" looked at you: usually you spoke, and the truth, so help you! Once (but this was afterwards) when the Barb—the darkey, who is a fool, as you know—was chased downstairs by a fellow in *d.t.s.* and his shirt, the "Nurse" met them on the stairs, took the poker from him and put him to bed again; and then coolly went to bed herself; which made the Barb very angry indeed.

Searle, who was born in one of the Carolinas (I never could remember which) says that if I allow her hair is like marmalade, he reckons her eyes are like wet violets. They are really sometimes slate-blue, but mostly grey, and always deep and dark round the lids, "put in with a dirty finger"; and never anything but good and sorrowful—with no sentiment or rot about it, as Barton says. I like the Mother's eyes. But when I anticipate and call her "the Mother" you mustn't think her an old woman, for it was a very small boy that gave her that name, as I am about to tell you. All nurses have nicknames. Searle says she is neatly made and strong as a polo pony; and Barton, as you know, says she is clean about the heels. That is all I can tell you about her; for to me, from the first day I saw her, the "Nurse" was always a beautiful and good woman; and you would only laugh if I dragged in about her making you feel religious, and that.

Barton was refilling his pipe and reaching "Hamerton on Sutures," which he had been reading, off the mantelpiece again, when the alarm rang, and he went out. Skittles met me in the hall with a fresh yarn as I was following him. I was beginning to tire of Skittles and her eternal humours, but smiled, preparatory to saying something serious, when Murphy ran up. Murphy is the receiving porter.

"Want you in the 'Operation,' sir. A casual: the Guv. said to take him in there."

"Coming. Anything curious?"

"Young I-talian kid. Got knifed. 'Is melodium's in the

'all." Murphy is decivilised, in spite of his name. Here was something! I bolted.

When I entered the small operating theatre, where they had taken the casual, there was a strong smell of iodoform. Barton was standing over something, and Ward-Sister Bouchier was holding it up and talking a strange tongue to it, gently persuading away a fright, and getting it to lie back in her arms. Two staff-nurses were doing nothing. It was just through a faint, and had its mouth full of ice. There were many red rags about; and Macgillicuddy (the "Guv."), with the electric candle in his hand, was standing up and examining a piece of steel like half of a larding skewer. The bandages were on, and the left arm was strapped. Portions of a treacle-coloured corduroy coat worn white, and a dirty flannel shirt, were scattered about the floor and on the glass-top tool table.

Murphy had reported correctly—it was a young Italian kid. We gathered from the evidence, and from what he told the Ward-Sister, that he had been having supper in Bocca's, the low Italian eating-house in Newhaven Street. Pepita, his monkey, was on the table beside him, begging gracefully for macaroni she did not want. Some merry countrymen were playing cards at the table behind, and drinking. There was a row. The table was upset: litres, demi-litres, glasses, bottles, cards, and money were jumping on the floor. Micha—that was his name: short, we thought, for "the midge," but really "Michael"—Micha sprang up and turned round. At the same instant Pepita, not to be out of the fun, swung across the tables, dropped to the ground, and went for the fallen coin. Her head was crunching under a big fellow's foot when Micha seized her, with a yell. Just then, as he stooped, a blow, with steel in it, caught him in the left scapula and snapped, knocking his breath out. Coughing and yelling, he dragged out the body of his Pepita. The waiters howled "Polizzi!" and the fight looked like being serious when Micha fainted and fell, striking his head against half a bottle standing up. They brought him round. The fatal blow was not intended for him. It was fatal. It nipped the posterior scapular vessel and transfixed the lung.

When Macgillicuddy left and Nurse got him to bed (where, but for Mac—who, as he was leaving, met them carrying him in—he would have been at first), moaning and clinging to her, I saw that he was a pretty little chap; and his hair matched his corduroys in three colours: naturally black, but white and blue also in places, from scruff, weather, and dirt. The bandages hid his forehead. His brown eyes, as big as plums, were like his ensanguined lips, pearl-colour from fright. He recovered his senses and colours in fifteen minutes and started yelling hard, and trying to get at the bandages. The hæmorrhage was brisk, and the trouble was to stop it. Nurse put in five minutes putting the brake on his energy, and we had to re-dress the wound over his left ear, replugin him, and feed him with ice. After this nothing would make him lie down, but, swaying his tiny fat body to-and-fro energetically, and looking round him and at us with piteous, suspectful eyes, evidently feeling just then more frightened than hurt, he coughed and moaned. As soon as Nurse slipped an arm under and turned him gently on his right side, so soon he was up again and on the swing, working his feet in time. He called upon the name of Pepita, and those of various other absent friends. We were evidently his enemies—none blacker. It was getting too difficult, so Barton got out a needle.

There are some people who can't help doing things in the right way, and when they take up a tool or show you how to handle a bad horse, you fairly laugh weakly for pure joy. When this kind of person is a woman, and that woman has a wild and dying son of Italy in her arms, you very nearly do the other thing. I never saw a patient or a baby handled as Ward-Sister Bouchier handled this twelve-year-old. She was all over him at once: the clothes and pillows were smooth and comfortable the minute after they appeared to be on the floor; and at the same moment the firm, gentle hands were handling the little man like a light and fragile toy. As Barton began levelling the air out of the hypodermic, Nurse and boy suddenly became one flesh. The brown eyes and the grey eyes were looking into each other: the two bodies were swaying in slower time; and the two mouths were very close, and talking and moaning

all manner of strange sweet things in the Italian language. Barton came round to the left side, and was foostering nervously at picking up the skin. I do not remember having seen Barton's hands go wrong before or since, though he always shies a trifle even now, whenever Nurse Bouchier's hands chance to touch his. This was his first serious case with her. The syringe was taken out of his hold, and the young Italian kid had his one-eighth of a grain of morphia before he felt the nip. He just said something like "*Ah, che—!*" looking sharply round at Barton, and turning back again for the swing-swing with his nurse, his one free arm round her neck. Then he stopped talking, and the swaying motion became ludicrous and slow. He had no eyes now for any one but her, to whom he uttered his dumb grief. The moaning ceased, and the breath came kindly and deep on a sigh. Presently he said something; and Barton, who was putting the wire through the needle, asked casually from the bottle-rack: "What's he say, Nurse?" Nurse turned slowly from her charge and, looking at Barton, replied: "He says, I am the Mother—the Mother of God."

This is how plain Ward-Sister Bouchier, who was for fourteen years in St. Aloysius's, and was called by us when she came to us "Nurse," or "the Nurse," by reason of her excellence, became "The Mother of God," and at her christening the four-year-old in the next bed, and the finest man in the hospital (seeing he had to keep both legs on a gallows-splint night and day for six weeks) crowed in ecstasy.

The young Italian kid had relaxed his grip of the Mother's neck, and gradually allowed himself to be laid back on his pillows. He beamed and blinked at the light while Barton applied the stethoscope. "Bubbling," he said, in reply to my look. Then the kid slept.

When the Mother returned to the bed and saw that all was clear, she asked Barton for parting orders. He shook his head and said (as if he had been hardened to it, or was talking to his own parent): "We can't keep him—Mother." She accepted the name.

The young Italian kid (remembered thereafter by us as

"Michael the Archangel," because he was such a good judge of heavenly matters) slept an hour, and jumped an hour later, at the usual jumping-off time—half-past three in the morning. And before we delivered him to his own people, we made a private subscription for the decent burial of the dusty tabernacle of a master-mind.

JOHN DE RENZY.

AN ANGEL UNAWARES

ALL day the Dervish knelt in silent prayer ;
All day the throng amid the market place
Had watched his shrunken form and silver hair,
But none had seen the aged stranger's face.

In worldly cares and worldly thought immersed
The multitude forgot the milk and bread
To proffer him when, hungry and athirst,
At set of sun the pilgrim raised his head.

And thus, as swiftly filled the Eastern height,
With moon and stars, the Dervish stole away,
Yet lingered, ere he vanished through the night,
A parting blessing on the town to pray.

And lo, a light enshrined him as he stood.
And one has said, who passed beside the place,
That surely (praised be Allah, wise and good !)
The face he looked on was an angel's face !

FRED G. WEBB.

A NOTE ON ISABEY

FEW phrases hold more of truth than the words of Stevenson that in romantic art "we become conscious of the background." The ideal of the classicists was a fine abstraction, of the romanticists a fine centrality. Enthusiasm for "*la vie vécue*," with its intricate problems of relation, is the motive of romance, and so, if in the history of art the romantic movements wear the guise of rebellion, in the history of humanity, which includes the history of art, the opposite is seen to be true. The classicists are the rebels, though in the presence of their dignity, of their august convention that truth seems a fretful impertinence.

In France, where, more than in other countries, art epitomises national feeling and opinion, classic painting was an issue of the classical convention imposed on the forms of life and thought and creation by the Hellenism of Winckelmann and his school. Life having thus submitted in appearance to the yoke, art—the ally—was long in attaining freedom from intellectual constraint. The tradition of David, the influence of Ingres obtained for two generations in the studios. With the exhibition of the "*Raft of the Medusa*" by Géricault in 1819 the revolt against classicism became formidable, and for ten years "the spirit that denies," of which that picture was the first result, was active in art. During these years Delacroix following Géricault expressed in a series of pictures the conviction that was to succeed the classical convention, and eagerness to render personal sense of fact replaced paraphrases of "*le grand style*."

Ingres, the opponent of Delacroix, held that form was the whole of art. In his rhythmic compositions he ignored reflected colour. Even reflected light he viewed with suspicion as an intruder from the undisciplined world outside his subject. Landscape background was with the classical school a compilation of conventional statements.

The establishment of the relation between art and life—the acknowledgment of the background—began with Delacroix, and found vivid expression on the human side, in the work of dramatic painters such as Delaroche, Decamps, Marilhat, Gérôme, Meissonier, and, with finer perception, in the “romantic” landscapes of Dupré, Rousseau, Diaz or Corot.

With the art of these men, and especially with the art of Diaz, the earlier work of Eugène-Gabriel Isabey has affinities. Born in Paris in 1804, the son and pupil of Jean-Baptiste Isabey, miniature painter in prosperity and exile to many European courts, Isabey *fils* made his reputation as a painter of genre, of the picturesque aspects of life, the coloured incidents in pleasure and war and ceremonial. These episodes of costume, of the recognised motives in romance, Isabey rendered with true sense of colour and design to create an impression of mood. The phrase of sentiment of adventure is constructed with skill and art; the colour suggests poetic meaning. Facts are recognised and expressed in the manner of greater painters; yet his work is no effort of imitation, but a personal expression of the spirit of the time, of the prevalent theory and mode of art.

For all its concern with emotional life the genre painting of Isabey is intellectual rather than emotional in origin; hence his manner is expert, unimpeded by doubt and hesitation. In this as in other qualities it has the distinction of French art—an art never uncouth, never incoherent in expression or obscure in significance. Though less jewel-like than the tones in which Diaz transposed nature, the colour of Isabey has something of the same charm. With him, as with Diaz, colour expresses a sensitive recognition of “quality” in the things he paints, though he does not attain to the courtliness of Diaz at his finest moments.

The distinction between these contemporary painters is, however, sufficiently marked when, forsaking genre, the one turned to Barbizon under the influence of Rousseau, while the other, during half a century, painted the sea pieces by which he is chiefly though not most fortunately known. The death of Isabey in 1886 closed a long and successful artistic career, in which the romantic genre of his youth is perhaps the most note-

worthy period. For these expert and vivid renderings of picturesque life are more than fortunate compositions. They are expressive of an ideal in art—the expression of the beauty, the passion, the strangeness of life. That is the real significance of a movement that, hastily judged, might be declared to have concern only with imitation of the costume, the emphasis and obvious contrasts of stage representations of life. The rendering of passion amid the picturesque, of sentiment combined with costume, is discredited in a day when the significance of life appeals for less rhetorical expression. Yet in the work of Isabey and of the other romanticists the truth we strive to express in different terms is the motive beneath the external trappings.

